COMIC BOOK PROFILES™

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The magazine about comic book professionals

Chris Claremont

No. 8•Fall 1999

Claremont talks about his days on the X-Men, his novels, the state of the comic book industry and more!

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

Bobbie Chase
Dave Cockrum
Tony Isabella
Stan Lee
Ann Nocenti
Mike Pascale
Jim Shooter
Louise Simonson
Walt Simonson
Steven Tice
John Townsend
Len Wein
Marv Wolfman
Link Yaco

NEW! *More artwork & creator checklist included!*

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Inevitably, after each issue, someone always asks, "Why didn't you interview so and so?" Each issue we start with a "wish list" of creators that we want to contact. We spend a lot of time trying to determine who would be best suited to give supporting interviews for an issue. So, it usually isn't that we didn't think of contacting the person, it's that it didn't work out for one reason or another. Usually it is because we were unable to contact that particular creator. Sometimes its because their schedules and ours are such that we can't interview them in a timely manner to be included in the issue. Every so often a creator declines to be interviewed.

Another thing we are asked is why didn't you ask so and so about . . ? For our next issue on Jim Aparo, we're giving you the opportunity to suggest questions. So fire away. If we end up using one of your questions—one that we did not think of ourselves—you'll get an acknowledgment on this page as well as a free copy of the issue. In the case of duplicate questions, we will acknowledge all who suggested it but only the person having sent in the question first, will receive the free issue.

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Remember, send in those questions for Jim Aparo!

Many Thanks To . . .

For those we interviewed, or who wrote articles, or who contributed art work: Terry Austin, Mike Burkey, Bobbie Chase, Dave Cockrum, Fred Hembeck, Tony Isabella, Stan Lee, Ann Nocenti, Mike Pascale, Enrico Salvini, Jim Shooter, Louise Simonson, Walt Simonson, Steven Tice, John Townsend, Len Wein, Brian Whitley, Marv Wolfman, and Link Yaco.

Of course a very special thanks to Chris Claremont who took time out of his busy schedule to be interviewed for this issue!

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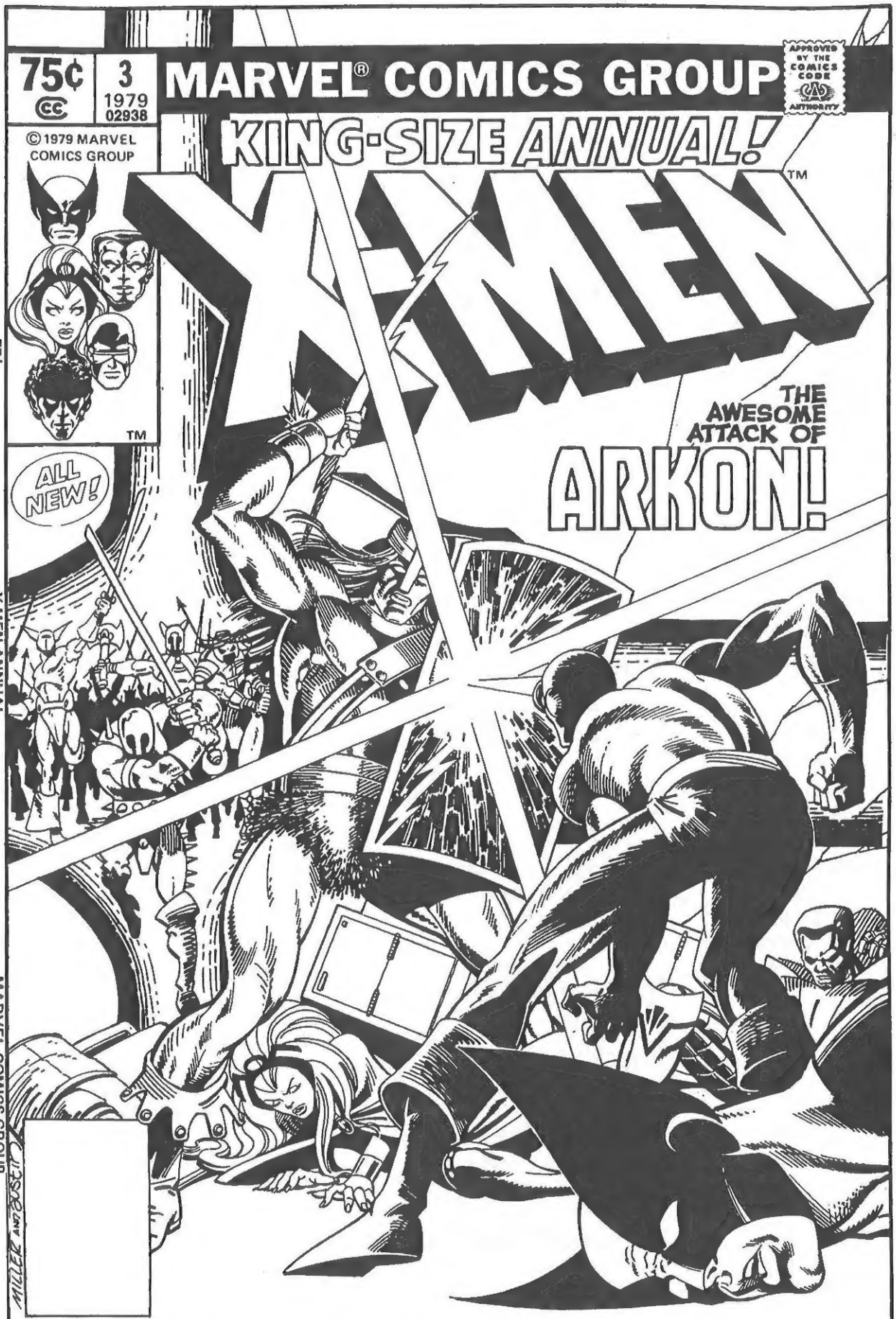

Frank Miller pencils, Terry Austin inks. *X–Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

PROFILE

CHRIS CLAREMONT

When you and your parents came over from England, where did you move to?
All over. Initially New York, and then Florida. Then after my father was drafted we went to Texas, and then Colorado, also to San Francisco and Chicago. And ultimately back to New York.

When you were growing up were you a comic book fan?
Not ferociously. I read them for enjoyment, but I read books as well. It was not the be all or end all of my existence.

What were some of your favorite books?
One of my favorites was a British series by Arthur Ransome from the thirties called *The Boats of Swallows and Amazons*. It was about young kids sailing on the lakes on North England. I loved Kipling. I loved Arthur Conan Doyle, probably because my great-grandparents knew him. Other authors I liked included: Robert Heinlein, Andre Norton, C.S. Forrester, and Ed McBain. I also read *Jane's Fighting Ships*—I was omnivorous.

Why did you choose Bard College?
Having grown up in Long Island, it was unlike anything I'd ever seen. Bard was small, it was intellectual, and it was out in the middle of nowhere. It was fun.

At Bard you majored in acting and political theory. That's an interesting combination. How do those two go together?
Well, I could say Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton and sum it up in a nutshell. [*laughs*] I wasn't heavily interested in the sciences or English for that matter. But I was very good at political theory and I was very interested in it. There was a point in my life when I thought it would be cool to grow up to be Henry Kissinger. Fortunately I grew out of that phase. Acting was a challenge that I couldn't walk away from. It was fun but it was something I couldn't do easily. It appealed to the emotional core of me rather than the intellectual and college was the first opportunity I had to go in that direction.

When did you decide you wanted to be an actor?
About half an hour after I got to Bard and discovered the only way that I could take an acting class was by making it my major.

TIMELINE

Chris Claremont

1950 Chris Claremont born on November 25 in London, England.

1968 Chris enters Bard College. He majors in acting and political theory.

1969 Chris interns at Marvel. While there he suggests an idea to Roy Thomas that Thomas will incorporate into an issue of the *X-Men.* Also, he will reject a story written by Tony Isabella.

1972 Chris graduates from Bard College. Also in that year, Chris gets his first story published by Marvel, *The Incredible Hulk* #148.

1974 Chris is hired as an assistant editor at Marvel. While there, he would be an assistant to Marv Wolfman, Len Wein, and Tony Isabella.

1975 Marvel begins publishing new adventures of the X-Men. Len Wein opts to give up the book and Chris is given the opportunity to write it.

1976 Early in the year, Chris decides to leave Marvel and to go freelance.

1980 "The Death of Phoenix" storyline by Chris, John Byrne, and Terry Austin is published.

1982 Chris teams with Walter Simonson on the X-Men/New Teen Titans cross over.

1983 The first X-Men spin-off book, *The New Mutants,* is published.

1985 *Black Dragon* is published by Epic Comics. Chris wrote and John Bolton drew this creator-owned series.

1986 Marvel begins reprinting Chris's early X-Men work in *Classic X-Men.* The title of the book would later be changed to *X-Men Classic.*

1991 *Uncanny X-Men* #279 is released. This would mark the end of Chris's long run on the book.

1995 DC publishes *Sovereign Seven.* This is the first creator owned property that takes place in the DC Universe. Dwayne Turner is the artist on the book initially.

1998 Chris returns to Marvel as the editorial director. He also takes over the regular scripting duties on the *Fantastic Four.*

1999 The third part of the Shadow Trilogy, a collaboration between Chris and George Lucas is released.

Were your parents supportive of your interest in acting?
Yes, I think so. My parents belief was that once I was out of high school I was on my own. It was my life and I could take responsibility for it. My grandfather to his dying day would always ask when I would get a substantial job. My folks were very good about it. And by the time I got out of school I wasn't half bad. My parents could see that I had some future in that area. The only problem was I was getting a lot better a lot faster at writing. So it sort of came to a point where I had to make a choice.

Would you say that your training as an actor has made you a better storyteller?
I would hope. I would like to think it's given me a better ear for dialogue. I would hope yes, but from my perspective it's hard to tell. It's too subjective a perspective.

How did your internship at Marvel come about?
It was during my first year at Bard; they had a field period where the school shut down from December to March and you were expected to go out and work in your major subject for two months. Unfortunately there were not that many theatrical gigs available in the winter. We were just transitioning from the Johnson to the Nixon administration so there weren't a lot of political jobs available for ex-McGovern, ex-Kennedy democratic supporters. The notion of taking time off to go find yourself was simply not an option in the late sixties, especially if you had a high draft number. My parents knew Al Jaffe of *MAD Magazine*. My original goal was to get a job at *MAD*, because Bill Gaines took everyone on around-the-world trips, and I thought this would be cool. That shows you how naive I was. [*laughs*] *MAD* didn't have an office, they had a mail drop and Bill did everything out of his house. So getting a non-paying job at *MAD* was out of the question. Al, however, knew Stan Lee and he mentioned me to Stan, and when he heard that I would work for free he said, "Get him in here."

What did your duties include?
My duties were whatever was lying around at that particular time and not to be a pest—I failed miserably at that one. I was an obnoxious pest. [*laughs*] I answered fan mail, I answered the phone, I acted as a receptionist, proofreading, mailing, going for coffee; you name it, whatever was needed I did.

Is it true that when you were an intern at Marvel you rejected a story from Tony Isabella?
Yes. And boy did he never let me forget it! [*laughs*]

What was Marvel like in those days?
It wasn't as structured as it is today. It was a lot of work for no money. Which actually is the same principle they used for the paid help. Lots of work and even less money. [*laughs*]

It was much smaller. You could fit maybe a dozen people in the whole office. The artists' bullpen was the size of my office today. But then again, it was a bullpen that consisted of Herb Trimpe, John Romita, Sr., Marie Severin, and Frank Giacoia. Stan had an office and Roy Thomas had an office. The difference between them was Stan's had a door. It was a much more freewheeling and exciting time. Nobody figured this was an industry with a future. It was all sort of nuts and haphazard and a lot of fun. It was the latter half of the first generation of the Marvel universe, or maybe the second generation. A lot of stuff was still being discovered. I remember the first day that Tom Palmer's inks came in on Neal's pencils on *The X-Men*. I remember thinking, this stuff is gorgeous. Then of course the first issue came out and we got letters from people furious at how we had dumped Werner Roth for him. They wanted to know how could we exchange the cool and pristine beauty of Jean Grey as done by Werner for this big-haired, big-bosomed, bee-stung-lipped bimbo!? I was looking at Jean Grey thinking, I want her! I'm eighteen and I want her, bad. [*laughs*] It was a really exciting time and a really cool place to be. Much more freewheeling and anarchic and goofy and cool than DC. Almost like a clubhouse. DC was offices. They had receptionists; they had doors; they had an entire floor. We were just a bunch of guys hanging out in this little hole-in-the-wall on 62nd Street. It was the closest thing you could get to being underground and still be mainstream.

Was it around this time that you helped in plotting an early X-Men [#59] story?
Roy was sitting around saying he needed to get rid of the Sentinels and asked if anyone had any bright ideas? That was how it worked, you just sat around the bullpen and shot the breeze. Sometimes ideas just come out of nowhere. So I pitched a thought and he used it, and he gave me twenty bucks and I thought, hey this is cool.

While you were in college, I've read that you began sending in plots to Marvel, DC and Warren. Were any of them ever accepted?

Nope. Marv Wolfman rejected all the stuff I sent to Warren. He suggested that there was a fundamental difference between writing comics and writing novels, and maybe I should learn that before I tried to earn my living in comics. Dick Giordano lost all my submissions; they disappeared. Then I sent a second set in to DC and he sent a letter back pointing out that, generally speaking, if you're going to start a story with a couple making out on a couch it's better to show then making out than just show the back of the couch. Since comics are a visual medium, that is an active medium, static pictures are really dull. No one's going to buy a book with a splash page with a back of a couch on it. But the thing was, at the same time I was making my first prose sales, so it bothered me that no one in comics was buying any of my stuff. I didn't really think of myself as a writer at that point. Writing was fun but I thought I was an actor.

When you were getting prose published before you began working in comics, what type of stories were they?
Science fiction.

Your first plot for Marvel you worked with Archie Goodwin.
He and I started out at Marvel together. His script was my first plot on the Incredible Hulk. He was not just a friend, but something of a mentor. It was a very hard thing to lose him. He was like the Fred Astaire of comics, he made it all look so easy. Even though he sweated blood over every word you never realized how truly good he was until you try to do it yourself.

After you graduated from college you went to New York to be an actor. How did that go?
You audition, audition, audition, you get some jobs you don't get others. I did pretty well my first year. I got four or five jobs that actually paid. I did some work off-Broadway, I did some regional theater, I did some TV, I sold luggage at Saks. I got a job at Marvel part-time. The two and a half days I was at Marvel were the two and a half days they didn't need me. It didn't matter which two and half days it was; stuff would always come in when I wasn't there. So rather than lay me off altogether, they made me full time.

At some point it seemed you had to make a choice between acting and writing.
I never really thought of it that way. I figured I was in New York so I'd write and audition, which I did. I thought I would build up a nest egg and take a year off from acting. Then I got *The X-Men* and one year turned into two, two turned into five . . . you turn around and you realize you're writing full time, doing pretty good, and haven't been to an audition in three years.

So it wasn't a conscious decision on your part?
It didn't seem like it at the time. But I guess it's one of those life moments where you look at it in retrospect and you say, "oops."

Do you miss acting?
Oh yeah. I loved acting passionately, but writing and telling stories are as integral to me as breathing. You don't love breathing, but you can't live without it. I can live without acting. It's sad in the sense that it would have been fun. But the fiendish part of me looks back over the last twenty years and thinks if I hadn't been writing *The X-Men*, where would the industry be today? [*laughs*] Which to me probably constitutes the ultimate in hubris.

Did you ever think the X-Men would become so popular?
I never thought about it one way or the other at the time. When I started writing *The X-Men* my wildest dream was for there to be an industry in five years. We thought we were where we are now—dying. It sort of just grew and I thought this is fun.

I've read that you were not a fan of the original X-men.
I wasn't a fan of much of anything Marvel was doing until about 1966 when I finally read *Fantastic Four* # 49 when Stan and Jack were pretty much at their peak on the *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*. And Roy Thomas and John Buscema were doing some remarkable work on *The Avengers*. The Arnold Drake/Werner Roth era was not really my cup of tea. Though I thought the work that Neal Adams did with Roy was just spectacular. I think it's like anything else—the concept itself was and remains unique in the industry. The approach that each artistic team brings to it and how that concept is defined can have a dramatic impact on the popular perception and acceptance of the book. The first incarnation of *The X-Men* was a relatively modest mid-list title. It never really cracked the top tier of Marvel books, either in terms of public awareness or sales, which is why it was cancelled. Dave Cockrum and I built off the concepts that Dave and Len Wein established in *Giant Size # 1*. That collaboration and the work I did with John Byrne and Paul Smith found an audience that was always potentially there for *The X-Men*.

You have referred to your approach to the X-Men as

novelistic. Why did you decide to take that approach to the series?

Because I'm always more interested in character than in plot. To me character is the springboard to plot. The best stories are those that arise out of the interaction of the various dynamic personalities in any group setting. Coming up with a precisely structured story is to me an exercise in craft. What makes that story memorable and transcendent is how it affects the characters involved. To me, the classic case in point is the *Wolverine* miniseries that Frank Miller and I did. It arose almost completely and exclusively out of a discussion of character. The events grew out of Frank's and my assessment of who Wolverine was, where he came from, and what he wanted out of life. What would be the most painful and shocking thing to happen to him in that life? What would take away everything he held dear? How could he win them back? Many writers have done the good character goes bad story before. What made the Dark Phoenix storyline memorable was the impact it had on Scott, Jean and the rest of the X-Men, on the emotional havoc of the book. In my mind, a nicely constructed sequence of events will leave you thinking that's a nice story. Take that same nicely constructed sequence of events but build it around a passionate, emotional core, and you have a story that people will hopefully be talking about for years and years to come.

Dave Cockrum pencils, Terry Austin inks.

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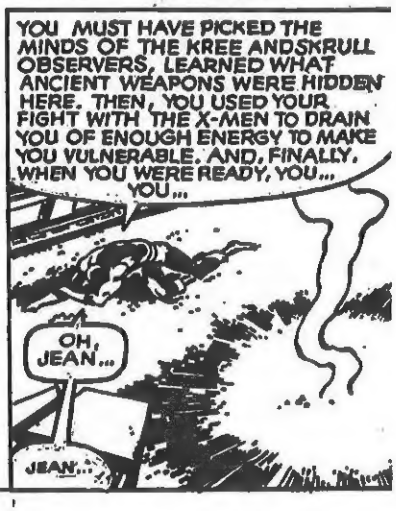
You've worked with some very talented editors. One of your earliest editors on The X-Men was Louise Simonson, who you have described as probably the best editor you've ever had. Why?

Aside from talent, aside from skill, aside from a generosity of spirit, unlike almost anyone I've encountered in this industry, she had the knack of inspiring the people who worked with her to do their best work and not feel threatened by it. Too often you have a dynamic between creators and editors which is adversarial. A writer says, "This is my story; why are you interfering," where an editor feels, rightly or wrongly, they must impose a their direction on a book. That gets everybody's hackles up. Weezie, certainly with me, and with other writers as well, was able to perform

YOU WANT ME TO FIGHT? I HAVE. I AM-- WITH ALL MY STRENGTH.
BUT I CAN'T FORGET THAT I KILLED AN ENTIRE WORLD-- FIVE BILLION PEOPLE-- AS CASUALLY, AS UNTHINKINGLY, AS YOU WOULD CRUMPLE A PIECE OF PAPER. I WANT NO MORE DEATHS ON MY CONSCIENCE...
YOUR WAY, I'D HAVE TO STAY COMPLETELY IN CONTROL OF MYSELF EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY FOR THE REST OF MY IMMORTAL LIFE.
MAYBE I COULD DO IT. BUT IF I SLIPPED, EVEN FOR AN INSTANT, IF I FAILED...

YOU... PLANNED THIS, DIDN'T YOU?! FROM THE MOMENT WE LANDED ON THE MOON. YOU SHIELDED YOUR INTENTIONS FROM OUR RAPPORT, BUT JUST THE SAME I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED, I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED...

...THAT YOU COULD NOT BECOME DARK PHOENIX AND REMAIN TRUE TO YOUR SELF, THE JEAN GREY I KNEW, AND FELL IN LOVE WITH. SO, YOU TOOK STEPS TO ENSURE THAT, IF LILANDRA COULDN'T STOP YOU, YOU'D DO THE JOB YOURSELF.


YOU MUST HAVE PICKED THE MINDS OF THE KREE AND SKRULL OBSERVERS, LEARNED WHAT ANCIENT WEAPONS WERE HIDDEN HERE. THEN, YOU USED YOUR FIGHT WITH THE X-MEN TO DRAIN YOU OF ENOUGH ENERGY TO MAKE YOU VULNERABLE. AND, FINALLY, WHEN YOU WERE READY, YOU... YOU...
OH, JEAN...
JEAN...

The X–Men #137 as it was published.

John Byrne pencils, Terry Austin inks. *X–Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

BOOK THE X-MEN ISSUE#137 PG.# THIRTY-THREE
* STAT CAPT. IN NEG.
--REACHING OUT TO THE MAIMED CREATURE, TRYING HIS BEST TO EASE ITS HURT.
I'M HERE, JEAN--
--TAKE MY HAND!
HER GRIP MAKES HIM WINCE WITH PAIN, YET HE ENDURES. SHE'S NEVER NEEDED HIS LOVE, HIS STRENGTH, MORE THAN SHE DOES NOW.
HE WILL NOT FAIL HER.
AND, AS HE HOLDS HER, THE RAPPORT THAT BOUND THEIR MINDS SLOWLY FADES AWAY TO NOTHING, WITHOUT JEAN'S TELEPATHIC POWER TO MAINTAIN IT...
...IT CANNOT EXIST.
UNTIL, FINALLY...
OUR RAPPORT--IT'S GONE!
I FEEL SO EMPTY INSIDE. THERE'S ONLY A HOLLOW ACHE-- AS IF SOMEONE HAD JUST PUNCED A HOLE THROUGH MY HEART.
IF THINGS FEEL THIS AWFUL TO ME, HOW MUCH WORSE ARE THEY FOR JEAN?! SHE JUST COLLAPSED INTO MY ARMS WITHOUT A WORD, A SOUND, A GESTURE!
SHE'S BREATHING--BARELY--BUT THAT'S ABOUT ALL.
SCOTT, IS SHE ALL RIGHT?!
IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO?
HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY DONE --ENOUGH?!

The X–Men #137 as it was originally written.

John Byrne pencils, Terry Austin inks. *X–Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. *All rights reserved.*

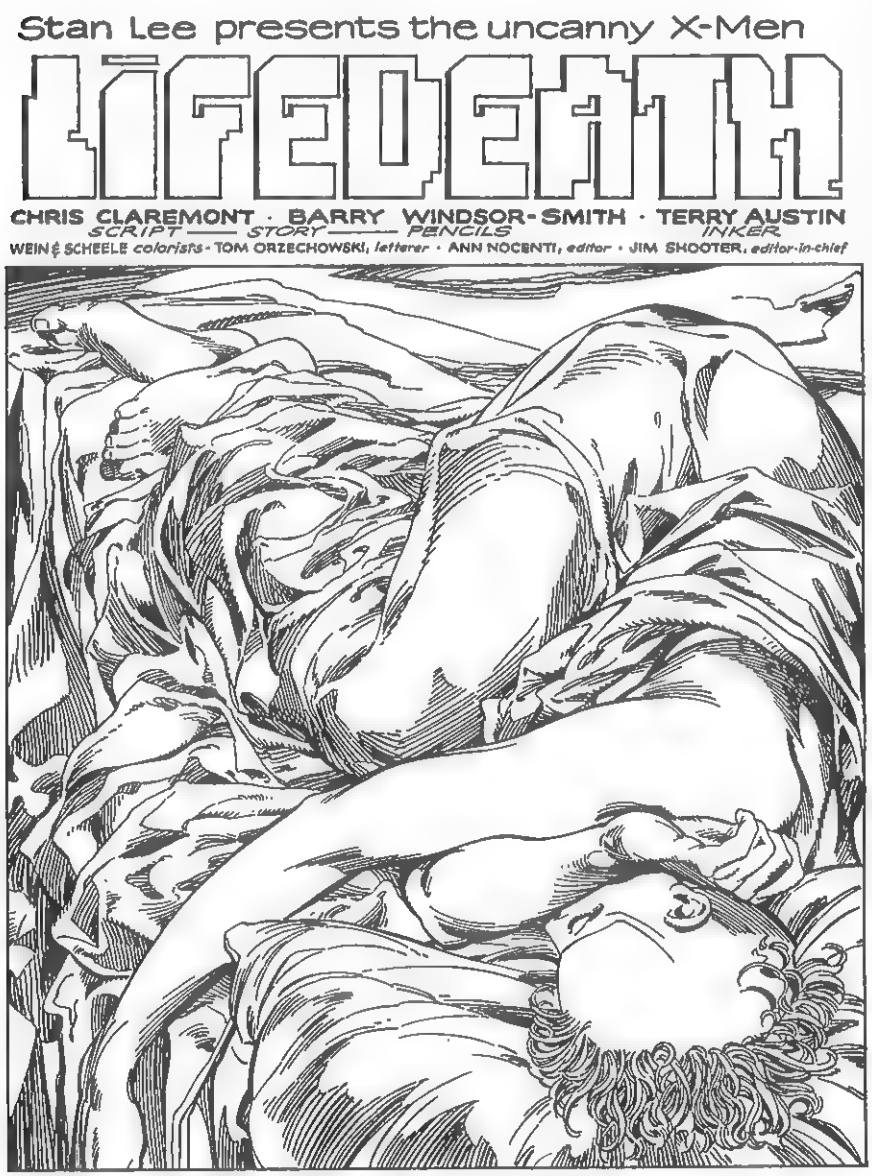
the necessary functions of an editor. That is to point out when a story doesn't work, when a plot isn't holding together, or when the characters are not being true to themselves. She did it in ways that encourages the writer to: a) believe that it was the writer's own idea, and b) come up with a better idea as a result. One of the things about being an editor is that you're primarily a facilitator; you're there to help the writer uncover the core and the essence of the story. On some occasions the writer may not even realize what that story is. It may be something diametrically different from what they set out to tell in the first place. The thing with Weezie is that she gave me the confidence to pitch any idea whatsoever no matter how absurd. I could tell her any story and it gave me the freedom to hear, from my own lips, how dumb the story was. Because you can generally hear it yourself when you're pitching a clunker. Half the time the editor doesn't have to reject it because you're doing the job yourself. You say, "What was I thinking? How could I have done that?" But then you say, "What can we do with the idea? Maybe we can do this, maybe we can do that." What she also brought was a tremendous enthusiasm. She liked listening to people. She liked listening to you pitching your idiot stories. She enjoyed the work when it came in. And that kind of enthusiasm, unfortunately these days, is very rare, because everybody is so browbeaten and jaded. Artists and writers need the validation of an editor being enthusiastic; it is like an actor getting applause.

Initially, you were upset with the change in the end of the Dark Phoenix storyline. Later you would characterize the changes as "brilliant." What changed your mind?
The reason I was upset at the time was that John Byrne and I had a story in mind; we had this grand design. There was a miscommunication and Jim Shooter felt he had not been kept current on exactly what we were doing. Which in this case, involved Jean committing an act of planetary genocide. Our rationale, John's and mine, was it wasn't her fault. She was nuts. Jim's argument was you do not get off on three billion counts of murder on a technicality. It may be legal, but it did not make a moral statement that he thought was appropriate for Marvel. Whatever we felt about this decision, it was Jim's right and responsibility to make it. It upset me because I liked Jean a lot as a character. Had we known this would be the end result, would we have, as a throwaway, incinerated a planet? I don't know. But, looking back on the impact it had, it quickly became apparent that Jim's decision was the right call. You have to take responsibility for your actions, especially if you're a hero. The whole point of comics hero/villain paradigm, is that heroes should and do take responsibility for their actions and villains do not. To give Jean a get out of jail free card, while it would have made us happy as the creators, ultimately it would have been a mistake for the book. We basically had two alternatives; we could either have her go to prison or she could die. My feeling was that if she has to be punished, if she has to take responsibility for this action, let's have her go out with honor and glory and dignity and give her a really good death. The problem was that the issue was ready to go to the printer. We had to sit down over the weekend and come up with the epilogue so that John could literally pencil it over night and get it to Terry Austin so that he could literally ink it overnight, so that I could write it and Tom Orzechowski could literally letter it overnight. The improvisation that we had to go through turned out to be remarkably serendipitous. Without meaning to, we stumbled into the right ending for the story; an ending which defined the X-Men better then anything did at the time. It gave the book a weight it hadn't had before and that no other book had achieved. From *X-Men* #136-137 to *X-Factor* #1, which corresponds to *X-Men* #200, the team operated under the realization that one of their oldest and most powerful members had died in action. So there were very real risks attendant with being an X-Man. It's one thing for Wolverine to accept that reality, it is another for a character like Kitty Pride; how does a 13 or 14 year old react? It allowed us to address issues with a seriousness that other books didn't have because other books have the comforting foundation that no matter what happens the core cast comes out alive. For those five years, everyone was at risk. I thought that was sort of fun. And the readers responded to that.

That was my primary objection to resurrecting Jean for *X-Factor*. By saying it wasn't Jean, that it was a cosmic force masquerading as Jean, made all that story is irrelevant.

How did you find out that Jean Grey was being resurrected?
I knew a new book was in the works, called *X-Factor*, which was being done outside the "X Department." The goal of this book was to reunite the surviving original members of the X-team: Cyclops, Angel, Iceman, and Beast. One night, Barry Windsor-Smith, Ann Nocenti, and I were out to dinner to plot *X-Men* #198 which was the sequel to the "LifeDeath" story which Barry and I

had originally done in *X-Men* #186. So we sat down to dinner and Ann told me that the *X-Factor* proposal now included a fifth character, Jean Grey, who was being resurrected. I went terminally ballistic. I sat there for a minute, got up and went to a pay phone. But fortunately I forgot Jim Shooter's extension because the Marvel offices had just moved. It was well after six o' clock so the switchboard was closed. My alternatives were to either go up there and confront him in person, or let it sit for the weekend. I decided it was not a good thing to storm back to the office because I didn't want to say something I might later regret. Over the weekend I came up with a counter-proposal for a character to take Jean's place, as well as marshalling all the arguments as to why I thought this was a serious mistake. So I talked to Jim on Monday, and made my case. Jim appreciated my arguments. He was very interested in the character I came up with, but he felt the marketing arguments in favor of resurrecting Jean far outweighed what I felt was the critical damage being done to the canon. We were clearly not happy and it got the relationship off between the X-Men and X-Factor departments off on bad footing. Looking back on it now, especially now that I'm editorial director, I understand the rationale for his decision. As the writer on the book at the time, I think it was a mistake. As passionately as I disagreed with Jim, it was his right and his responsibility to make the decision. And to his credit, Jim tried to do right to those of us who felt upset by the decision.


Stan Lee presents the uncanny X-Men
LIFEDEATH
CHRIS CLAREMONT · BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH · TERRY AUSTIN
SCRIPT STORY PENCILS INKER
WEIN & SCHEELE colorists · TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer · ANN NOCENTI, editor · JIM SHOOTER, editor-in-chief

Barry Windsor-Smith pencils, Terry Austin inks.

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What comes to mind when you think about the time you spent writing the X-Men?

The choices I made. The decisions I didn't. Should I have made it that integral a part of my life? Should I have walked away sooner? Should I have not walked away at all? The stories I didn't tell. The stories I could have told better.

What would you say are the challenges in writing a team book like The X-Men or Fantastic Four?

Choreography for one. Just keeping tack of everybody, making sure they get their appropriate amount of time on camera. With the *FF*, far more than the *X-Men*, you need to find aspects of the characters that are new and fresh and original and haven't been done five or six dozen times before. The challenge with the *FF* is that by

the very nature and the dynamic of the book you're locked into the four characters of Reed, Sue, Ben, and Johnny, period. There's only four of them. The thing with other teams like *The X-Men* is that worse comes to worse you can change the dynamic. You can write characters out, or bring new ones in. You can change the whole texture and tenor of the group. You can't do that with the *FF*. The positive side of it is the interaction of so many disparate, dynamic personalities that you will have a never ending source of stories. The downside is you have to keep track of them all.

Do you think that you will ever write Sovereign Seven stories again?
Currently my agent has a book proposal with the characters. Will I ever do it in comics? Given the state of the industry and the sales history of the book . . . I don't think DC would take another crack at the book and Marvel at this stage of its corporate history does not have an arena for publishing creator-owned material.

Currently you are the editorial director at Marvel. What do your duties include?
Reading everything, plots and finished books. Basically working with the editors in the way that they work with the writers. The ideal is that I am the person that has the most comprehensive knowledge of what everyone is doing. Therefore I can more easily see the strands that link together; where we can draw common events, crossovers. I point out that wouldn't it be neat to do this book with this character at this point, etc. It's a little bit unstructured because no editor likes having someone looking over their shoulder. I bring to the job, I hope, a level of institutional memory and craft and expertise that is fairly rare in today's industry. So when I look at something I can look at it not only on the level of is this a good story but is this a good story in terms of the history of these characters in the Marvel universe.

Of the many talented artists you've worked with, which collaboration do you feel worked the best?
It depends on the story. In terms of favorite collaborations I could go to Dave Cockrum, John Byrne, Rick Leonardi, Art Adams, Frank Miller, John Bolton, Walt Simonson, or Barry Windsor-Smith. The advantage I've had over my career is that I've had the opportunity to work with some extraordinary talents. But that sort of makes it impossible to choose between them because I can look at the stories and think, how can I choose between what Frank did on *Wolverine*, or Rick did on the *New Mutants*, or what John Bolton did on the *Black Dragon*, or what John Byrne did on *X-Men*, or *Star-Lord* even. It literally is impossible to choose because at that particular level you're talking about talents who are at the top of their game. It's like playing with Roger Clemens, David Wells, and David Cone. Who's the best pitcher in the lot? Who cares? They're each gifted in their own way. They each have their strengths, they each brought a unique vision and gift to that particular project. There is not a best. They were all delights, and marvels in their own way.

Of everything that you've written is there anything that you are the most proud of?
There are many things; the *Wolverine* miniseries, The X-Men/Teen Titans crossover, the Dark Phoenix saga, *Black Dragon*. The thing I'm most proud of are my kids. The thing I'm most proud of that I've written, I don't know. I like to think I haven't written it yet. That's a judgment I'd rather leave to someone else because then I can argue with them. [*laughs*]

How long do you see yourself on the Fantastic Four?
The smart-aleck answer is till my mortgage is paid off. As long as it's fun. As long as there's an *FF* to write, as long as my editor is happy with the work I'm doing. Same as with any book; you don't want to be in a situation where you and your editor are at loggerheads, and where it's not really a pleasant or harmonious relationship. Life is too short. The intensity of the situation is too great. So you want to find a compatible, simpatico relationship, which I think I have with Bobbie [Chase]. So for me the answer is as long as it's fun, as long as she'll have me, as long as the book succeeds. We'll see.

What future projects do you have planned?
I'm working on a new prose novel. I have some proposals in to Marvel that I can't talk about, partly because I consider it bad luck to talk about something before it's signed and sealed. Like any creator these days, part of the goal is to diversify one's sources of income. I want to maintain my prose writing identity; partly to build off of the success and reputation I've earned both with my own work and working with George Lucas [*The Shadow Trilogy*] and partly because it exercises different parts of the brain, and partly because you don't want to be a one-trick pony. Especially if that pony is not as healthy as it used to be. ❖

Salvador Larroca pencils, Art Thibert inks from *Fantastic Four* #4. *Fantastic Four* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

A Novel Idea

Your first novel, was FirstFlight. What do you see as the rewards of writing a novel as opposed to writing a comic book?
Unique vision. The novel's mine; comic books are of necessity, a collaboration between the editor, the artist and I. For the most part, the novels that I write are mine and not licensed properties. They are stories that I want to tell about characters that I like. And ultimately characters that I own.

You've had two novels come out that were collaborations with George Lucas . . .
And the third is in production.

How did that project come about?
Bantam was trying to solidify their relationship with Lucasfilms after the success of Tim Zahn's *Star Wars* books. They had a whole raft of Star Wars material in the pipeline so they asked Lucas if there was anything else he was interested in doing. Were there any stories that he had not told that he might want to tell? Turned out that there was a lot of interest about what happened after the end of the movie *Willow* and it was unlikely a sequel would be made. So he pitched *Willow* to Bantam and they thought it was a cool idea. My name evidently came up in discussions and Lucas evidently thought it was cool, so they called me and I said, "Hell yes!"

Speaking of collaborations, what was it like working with your wife on DragonMoon?
Rewarding and infuriating at the same time. She is the best prose editor I have ever worked with. But she takes no prisoners. If you have a bad editor at work, you can go home and bitch about them to your wife. If the editor is your wife, you are sort of stuck. The annoying and frustrating thing is that she is a phenomenally good writer in her own right. So you have to factor in a smidgen of jealousy as well. "Oh man, I wish I had come up with that phrase." She brings assets to the story process that I don't have. And I bring assets that she does not have. So even though we are both equally good in our own right, the whole is far greater than the sum of the parts.

Novels by Claremont

Walk into any book store and it is very easy to find many books written by Chris Claremont. Many of these are collections of comic book stories that he has written including the Essential X-Men series, the Dark Phoenix Saga, Fantastic Four vs X-Men, Wolverine: Triumphs & Tragedies, Star Trek: Debt of Honor, and the Sovereign Seven. However, you can also find many of his prose novels. The following is a list of these books.

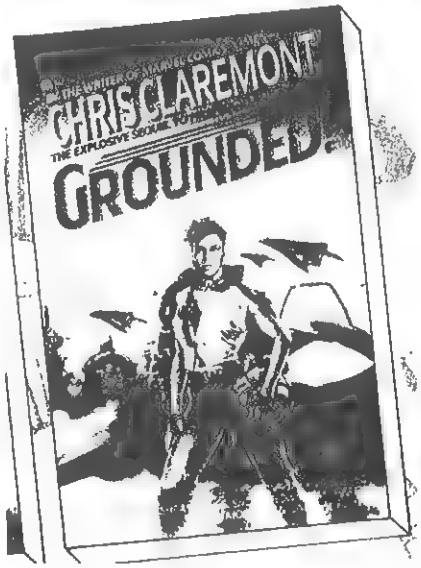
FirstFlight This is the first prose novel published by Chris. The paperback version of this book was published in 1987.

Grounded The first sequel to *FirstFlight*. The paperback was published in 1991.

Sundowner The second sequel to *FirstFlight*, published in 1994.

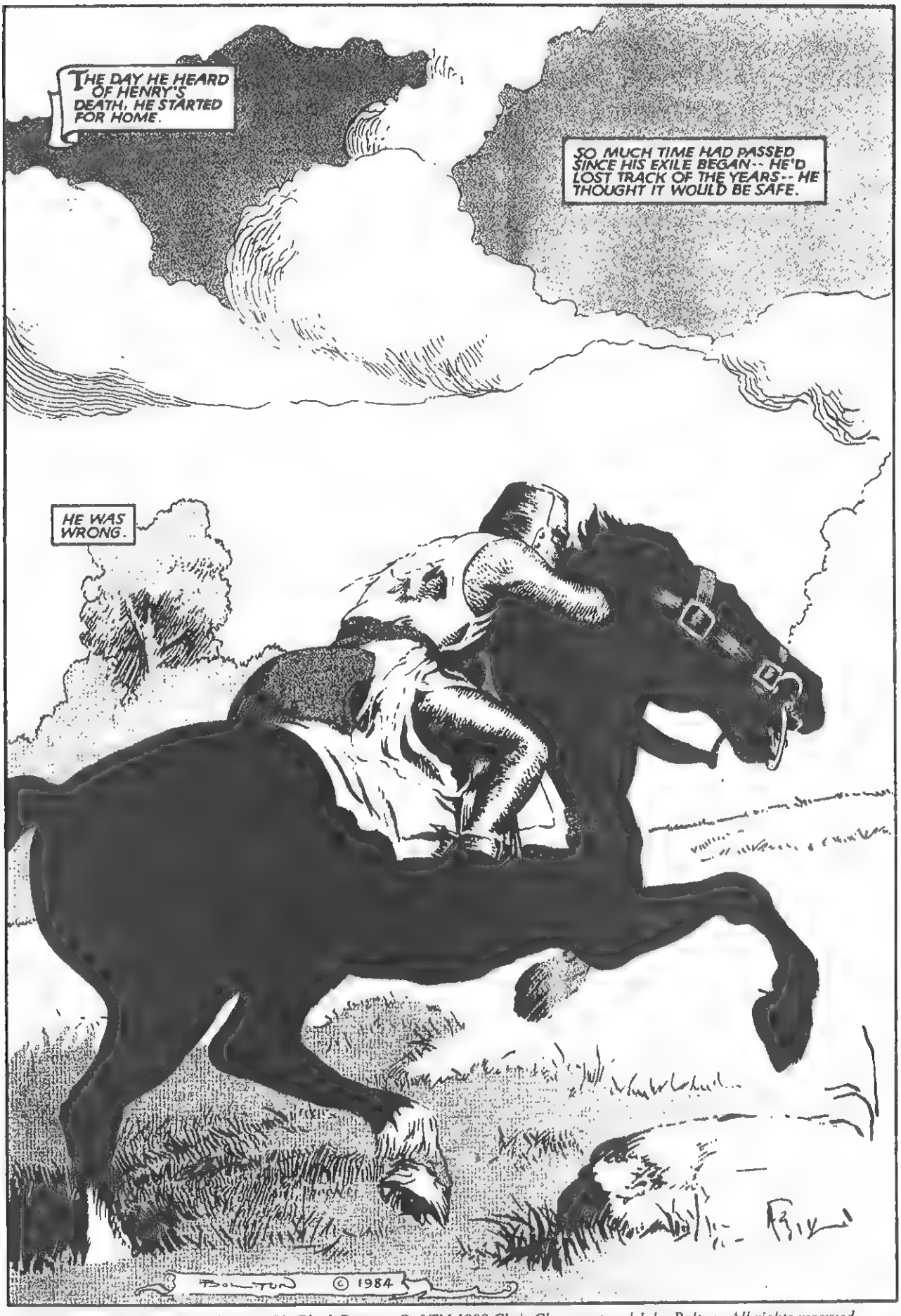
DragonMoon Published in 1994 with illustrations by John Bolton.

Shadow Moon Co-written with George Lucas. This is the first part of the Shadow War trilogy. Originally published in 1995.



Shadow Dawn A second collaboration with George Lucas; this is the second installment of the Shadow War trilogy. Originally published in 1997.

Shadow Star The third part of the Shadow War trilogy from Lucas and Claremont. This book was published in 1999.


THE DAY HE HEARD OF HENRY'S DEATH, HE STARTED FOR HOME.
SO MUCH TIME HAD PASSED SINCE HIS EXILE BEGAN-- HE'D LOST TRACK OF THE YEARS-- HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE SAFE.
HE WAS WRONG.
BOLTON © 1984

John Bolton art from *Black Dragon* #1. *Black Dragon* © &TM 1999 Chris Claremont and John Bolton. *All rights reserved.*

You said that back when you were an intern no one thought that comics were an industry with a future . . . No.

What do you think about that today? Well, considering sales today are lower today than they were then . . . I suppose you have to decide what you mean by comics. As a medium, as an art form, I think it will survive. There are just too many talented people and too many means of getting access to distribution. Whether Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, and Image will survive as we have known them—especially Marvel and DC—and whether comics in the format that we know them—the thirty-two page periodical—will survive, I don't know. At this point the numbers just keep going down. No matter what we try there is this incremental but consistent drop in sales from a month to month basis. In the space of seven to eight years you've gone from *X-Men* averaging four to five hundred thousand copies an issue, without looking at the speculative bump, to barely a hundred. Ten years ago Marvel could look at a dozen or so comic books selling over a hundred thousand copies a month, now, the challenge is to hit sixty. And no matter how daunting Marvel's sales are, you have to assume, just looking at the Diamond listings, that DC's sales are at best 80% of that. So if you have a Marvel book selling a hundred thousand, you're lucky if the best DC book is selling eighty. If a mid-list Marvel book is selling fifty, a mid-list DC book would be selling forty. You're seeing books now selling in the teens and for a company like Marvel or DC that's not economical. We're not earning enough money on that title to cover the cost of turning on the lights.

I think today's market is very

"-- AND THEN LOCATE-- AND 'CAPTURE'-- PROFESSOR X."
JUST LIKE OLD TIMES.
WHAT IS THE SAYING, JEAN-- "PLUS CE CHANGE, PLUS CE MEME CHOSE?"
"THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME."
SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE I WAS LAST IN THIS MANSION, AND TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE X-MEN-- INCLUDING MYSELF--
-- IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH WE WERE ALL COMING TOGETHER...
... FOR THE FIRST TIME.
I NEED TO LEARN THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF YOUR INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITIES, HOW YOU MESH AS A TEAM, HOW BEST FOR ME TO INTERACT WITH YOU.

Jim Lee pencils, Scott Williams inks from *X-Men* #1. *X-Men* © &TM *1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

challenging. We have to figure out how to compete with a tremendous variety of alternate forms of entertainment, both on the internet and off. We have to find a way to market ourselves to a broader spectrum of audience. Whether it's over the internet, whether it's through bookstores, whether it's through K-Mart or whatever, I don't know. And it's not just Marvel that has to do that, it's DC as well. DC has existed for years as a research and development arm for Warner Brothers generating new characters to be used in either animation or live action film. Which is great. The only problem is, what happens when tastes in films change? If you can produce a Batman film that will earn 200 million dollars that's great. When you produce a Batman film that costs 200 million and makes only 60, this is not good. Because what do you do then with the second or third string characters? All of whom need to generate interest. If you don't have a successful publishing company how does that impact on non-media licensing like toys? Will kids be interested in toys based on characters that don't exist anymore as viable publishing entities? I don't know.

I think we're talking about having to go through a structural redefinition of the industry, much as we had to go through in the seventies and early eighties. The problem now is that back then we had the birth of the direct market which was great, except now we are preaching exclusively to the converted. People who go into comic book stores are people who want comics. This is great, but unfortunately there are less and less of them every year. We need to entice people who have never read comics before, then we can send them to the specialty stores. We need impulse buyers, we need browsers, we need people who will look at a cover and go, "Hmm, what's this?" and pick it up and look at it. We have no venues for that. We need books that appeal to women. We need books that appeal to kids. We need books that appeal to the audience that reads romance novels, and science fiction, and fantasy and westerns, crime and suspense. All of which score formidable numbers in and of themselves. On a regular basis *Star Trek* novels hit the best seller list, but *Star Trek* comics are a forgotten item. Even when they're graphic novels or trade paperbacks the only place we seem to be able to sell them are in comic books stores.

The frustration is you'll go into a Barnes and Noble, and they have 'Our staff recommend the following' but if you go into a comic book store, you will find books that have cards on them that say 'Don't buy this piece of garbage.' If you don't want to sell it, don't order it. If you're going to order it and put it on your wall, at least try to move the puppy. If for no other reason than to pay your rent as well as ours. It is intensely frustrating to have retailers actively slam your product as they are in the act of selling it. What's the point? You don't see Saks Fifth Avenue actively diss Calvin Klein on the floor, they need to sell Calvin Klein. You're not going to see Barnes and Noble actively diss, let's say the *Star Wars* books—even if they hate them—because they're in the business to sell books, to earn money. If you don't want to carry the books, don't order them. But if you're going to order them and carry them, then your responsibility as a retailer is to try your very best to sell them. We're trying our very best to produce the best work we know how in terms of art and story and characters. We're trusting our marketplace. By the same token, the marketplace has to be willing to work its end of the street as well. And I'm sure they are, but every so often it makes you crazy.

We have to find what our audience is interested in and find a way to give it to them better than they've ever seen it before.

The problem is, the direct market spoiled a lot of companies. There are a lot of publishers in comics who are very good at selling something that will walk out of the door on its own. They don't have a lot of experience or now, unfortunately, resources, to sell something that is hard, that is outside the mainstream. You always find people who want *Batman: Dark Victory*, or X-Men/Avengers, or X-Men/Legion of Superheroes. It's very hard to sell an idiosyncratic personal project. Those are the ones that could be the next Ninja Turtles or the next Spider-Man. We have to find what our audience is interested in and find a way to give it to them better than they've ever seen it before. Which from a creative standpoint, I think we are totally capable of doing, I just don't know if it will be in the form—and through the distribution—that is currently established. ❖

How Chris Claremont Creates Comics

How do you create a comic book story?
Anyway I can. For me the best stories start with a dynamic definitive visual image. The X-Men/Teen Titans crossover for example, started with this vision that I had in my head of energy coalescing into the shape of this inhumanly beautiful woman. She emerges from fire, reaches out, much like Michelangelo's David, and says, "Who summons Dark Phoenix?" A hand comes in from off-panel and a voice says, "I, Darkseid." At this point when I was pitching this to Weezie, Walt Simonson stuck his head in the office and said, "Darkseid? Did someone say Darkseid?" And we were all hooked. The whole story was a matter of building to that point and then going on from there.

Other stories start with an emotional image, or a character, or a plot point, what if . . . it depends.

I'm sure it varies somewhat depending on the artist you are working with but generally, how detailed do you make your plots?
Fairly detailed. I like to know what everybody is doing and where they are going, what the choreography is. It's a pain in the neck but I figure that if I can choreograph it then there is a hope that it will turn out all right.

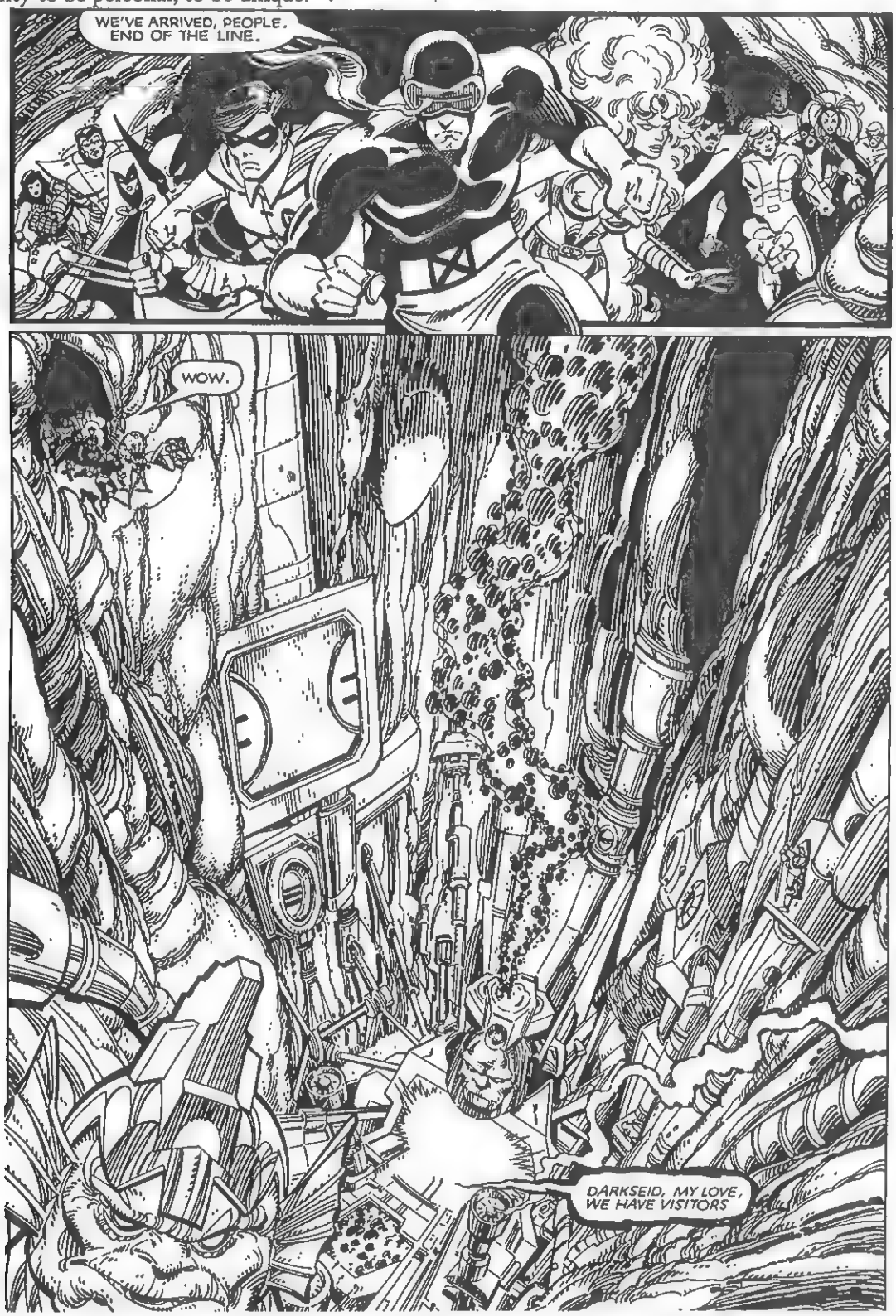
How long does it take you to write a typical comic book?
Impossible to say. Some of them, the plot falls into place boom boom boom, and some of them take a lot of work and time and effort. Some projects have taken a year to bring to fruition. Others just pop full blown from the head like Athena from the head of Zeus. There's really no set paradigm. On the other hand, the practical answer is if a writer is doing two books a month, then basically, it's however long it takes to do two books a month. If you have to get the work out, you have to get the work out. The disadvantage with comics is if you want to take time off, you either have to skip issues or double the work load. But you have to produce the twenty-two pages every issue, every month. A plot a month, a script a month. Or two or three or four. That's the one, I think, great frustration of the current situation in comics. For most of the eighties you had a circumstance where creators—the writer, the penciller, the inker—could supplement their page rates with the sales of the book. The more successful the book, the higher your royalties. So you could do less work and earn as much; or do as much work and earn more. Now unfortunately because of the precipitate drop in sales, we are back to where we were when I first started out. Basically, you earn your living as a creator in comics by producing tangible work. If you want to double your income you've got to do two books a month. You can't do one and figure a year later you'll get a nice check for sales. That isn't happening anymore. I think that's unfortunate, because that tends to put a tremendous amount of pressure on the creators and the editorial side of the staff. And that tends to lead to burnout, because a lot of people just can't continue that tremendous pace ad infinitum. It makes it that much harder to deal with the fact that you have a family, and as you get older you find more things to do with your life. That kind of workload is easy when you're twenty, it's not quite the same when you're forty.

How do you like to write?
These days with a computer. I have dozens of notebooks scattered around the house, much to the annoyance of my wife. I basically do the genesis work with pen and paper on a notebook. I used to do all my first drafts in longhand, but I always get bored with writing, and get interested in the craft of writing. I start doodling, and playing with actual formation of the words as opposed to telling the story. These days I pretty much compose on computer.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to break into comics as a writer?
The facile answer is to learn to draw. For example, when Jim Lee wants to pitch a concept, he sits down and he draws the concept. He visualizes it, he comes up with the characters, he makes a presentation that he can drop on someone's desk, and Bam! they have it right there. For me to come up with a concept I write it down, I drop twenty-five sheets of double-spaced typescript on somebody's desk, and they have to read it. Then we have to go out and get somebody to visualize it. So you're already taking it a step away from the essential, core image. You need to find an artist who is simpatico with your own sense of what the story is and who the characters are. That isn't always possible. And in those instances, the artist may have a totally different version or approach to the concept of the story than you do. You have to compromise between the two. It's the difference between prose and comics. Prose is a purer vision. One is right brain, I write a page of description, of what Mr. Fantastic is doing, and the reader fills in the details. Whereas in comics the artist interprets these details. If I was an artist I could just sit down and draw it and it would be much more clear. But it would also be locked into that one image forever. For example, if you're reading Larry Niven's *Ringworld* series his image of a Pierson's puppeteer—a three-legged creature with two sea-serpent heads growing out of its shoulders—conjures a very specific image to me. The same description may

Walt Simonson pencils, Terry Austin inks. *Dark Phoenix* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc., *Darkseid* © & TM 1999 DC Comics. *All rights reserved.*

conjure a totally different image to somebody else, no less valid. But if we were to turn to John Byrne and ask him to draw a Pierson's Puppeteer, he may draw a Puppeteer that is exactly the way Larry envisioned it, but maybe not the way I envisioned it. But that would be the defining image forever, because it's on paper. So it's both the advantage and disadvantage of comics over prose. It's clear, it's distinct, it's there, but it's clear and it's distinct and it's there. There's no opportunity to be personal, to be unique. ❖



Walt Simonson pencils, Terry Austin inks. *X-Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc., *Teen Titans* © & TM DC Comics. *All rights reserved.*

Kerry Gammill pencils, Terry Austin inks. *X–Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc., All rights reserved.

TONY ISABELLA

Chris rejected one of your early stories that you sent to Marvel. Is that right?
When Chris was working as an intern at Marvel, I had submitted a western story which Chris rejected. It was a very polite letter of rejection clearly pointing out why Chris felt that the story wasn't of sufficient quality for Marvel to purchase. I thought it was a pretty good rejection letter and I held on to it.

Eventually, Chris became your assistant.
Yes, Marv Wolfman was editing the black and white magazines and when they got to be more than he could handle, they split off about half of them and gave them to me to edit. The books included *Monsters Unleashed*, *Tales of the Zombie*, *The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*, and a couple of others. It was decided that I needed an assistant. The guy I wanted to hire as my assistant was Chris Claremont. Chris had been doing some writing here and there for Marvel and I had read some of his stuff. There was the X-Men story idea that he had given to Roy which I thought was brilliant. Plus I remembered him from the rejection letter, which was also a factor as to why I wanted to hire him. The slush pile at Marvel was usually ignored and if we were ever going to go into it and look for people, I knew I needed somebody with Chris's ability to help me with that. I thought he was very talented, very knowledgeable, very professional, far more professional than I was, and I figured he would be a good assistant for me.

There was some resistance to my hiring him because at the time Chris was also pursuing his acting career. And I was warned that if I hired Chris the minute he got an acting job he'd leave me high and dry. Well, I really wanted Chris as my assistant editor so I lied. I said, "Hey guys, I've seen him act, we've got nothing to worry about." [*laughs*] With that objective removed I hired Chris as my assistant editor.

It was just a fluke of luck that I was going through some papers and I found that rejection letter. So, I had that letter waiting on his desk his first day as my assistant editor. Chris took it in the friendly spirit in which it was intended.

He was wonderful to work with. He did a zillion voices. Our office was such a fun place to work that people who weren't really in my department requested to have their desks moved into our office. I just knew Chris was going to turn out to be a real good hire for Marvel. And he was. Of all the people I hired at Marvel, I think Chris has probably gone the farthest. And deservedly so.

What were his duties as your assistant?
Well, I would buy the stories and do the assigning. Chris would do some of the re-writing, if it was necessary; he would do a lot of the proofreading—we almost always proofread things twice. He'd help me line up the issues and he'd help me make sure that everything was in. He wasn't quite a co-editor, because all the decisions that had to be made were mine, but if I had stayed on staff it probably would have evolved into that because I just had so much confidence in his ability.

He was a hard worker, an organized worker, he had people skills, actual editing skills—like proofreading and grammar—you name it, everything a professional editor needs he had. It was an absurd workload. I could not have done it without Chris. He was a terrific assistant.

Are there any anecdotes you would like to share with us?
I have a story in which I *used* Chris. The late Duffy Vohland who was a dear, dear man, was a good friend of mine from my days in fandom, and he was working at Marvel in the production department. Duffy, however, was the most gullible human being on the face of the earth. One time when we were working at Marvel together, I convinced him that Marvel was going to be doing comic book adaptations of X-rated movies, and pulling all our best writers and artists off superhero titles to do that. Duffy would believe anything you told him. So one night, shortly after Chris had started working at Marvel, Duffy and I were both working late. Duffy came into my office and asked me how Chris was working out, I said, "You know he's terrific. He's everything I want in an assistant editor. I just hope Marvel doesn't find out about his other job." And Duffy goes, "What other job?" I said, "Well, I probably shouldn't have even told you that much." Duffy was being persistent because he loved gossip and he kept trying to get this out of me. At this point, I'm just making this stuff up as I'm going along. And finally I said, "Well, don't tell anybody this, because you know how uptight some of the people around here can get, but a couple of nights a week Chris works in this nightclub as a female impersonator." And Duffy says, "Oh yeah, they would never understand that. Don't

worry, I would never tell anybody." So he goes off to his cubicle. About a half an hour later, Duffy strides into my office, hands on his hips, glares at me and goes, "He has a beard!" [*laughs*] So even when Chris wasn't there, I had fun with Chris. ❖

MARV WOLFMAN

Chris worked as your assistant for awhile?
Yes. I probably made his life hell as my assistant. We had an awful lot of work with a very small staff. The one thing I tried to do, as Roy did with me, was to trust the other editors. I hope I did—I have no idea.

Do you have any anecdotes about Chris you can share?
Chris was really into acting. He had done some acting and he really tried to push the British side of himself. So it took a while to get to really know him. I eventually realized he was as screwy as all of us. I like Chris an awful lot, always have.

LEN WEIN

Why did you choose Chris to succeed you on the X-Men?
He had great enthusiasm. When I did the first few stories—*Giant Size* #1 and the two parter that Chris ended up dialoguing—he was very excited about things. He made some good suggestions. At the time, I was editor-in-chief and could only write a book a month with the schedule I was keeping. I was writing *Incredible Hulk* and the *X-Men* so something had to give. The *Hulk* was my favorite book and my favorite character so I had to find someone to take over the *X-Men*. Chris's enthusiasm made him a logical choice.

Did you ever regret your choice?
In terms of giving up the book? Yes, of course, considering where that book went and how it affected the industry. The money Chris made off the book over the years was far more than I ever made off of those characters. Of course, on the other hand, under me it may not have done as well. You never know.

STAN LEE

Did you ever think the X-Men would become as popular as they have?
Well, I hoped they would and I am delighted that they are.

What do you think it was about Chris's writing that made it such a success?
He was able to make the characters so believable and so empathetic; it was the characterization mainly. When Jack and I did it, we played up the characterization just as much. But what Chris also did was that he kept changing and adding characters. Jack and I had our team and kept the same characters almost like a TV series. Chris kept adding additional characters and that helped to make it a hot book.

What do you think makes Chris a good writer?
He is able to write good dialogue, he is able to write characters that you care about, and he comes up with stories that hold your interest.

I have always found Chris a pleasure to work with. One of the good things about Chris is that he is not only a comic book writer but he is also a writer. And I think that is so important. A person who writes comics should be more than just a comic book writer; they should have the potential to write a novel or a screenplay. They should know the basics of writing; plot construction, character development, etc.—Chris has those abilities.

Rick Leonardi pencils, Terry Austin inks, from *Uncanny X–Men* #228. *X–Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

From The Editors Desk

Chris Claremont has worked with a wide variety of editors in his career. Here we present four of those editors. Three of them, Jim Shooter, Louise Simonson, and Ann Nocenti worked with Chris on the X-books. The fourth, Bobbie Chase, is Chris's current editor on the Fantastic Four.

Jim Shooter

What do you think makes Chris such a good writer?
Dedication. Chris just outworked everybody.

How much of the success of the X-Men would you attribute to Chris?
Almost all. Granted he worked with great artists, but the reason he worked with great artists is because he went out and recruited them. His dedication on that book, and the work that he put in was unbelievable. He really took it personally. He wanted the best lettering so he got Tom Orzechowski to letter the book. The same with the coloring; he wanted the best colorist and so he got Glynis Oliver. He recruited artists like John Byrne, Marc Silvestri, and John Romita, Jr. When it looked like we needed a new artist Chris was on the case. More than anyone else, Chris built that franchise.

Where do you think that dedication came from?
I think he's a pro. He works hard. During the ten years I was there, he was doing a lot of work. I can't tell you how many times Chris would come in after being up all night, because he knew if he got the book in late we'd have to get someone else to do a fill-in issue and he didn't want that to happen. He wanted it to be his book, and he didn't want anybody to mess with it. He would do whatever it took. There would be times when he had been at a convention, or maybe had even been in Europe, and he would come home all jet-lagged and still come in the next morning with those last few pages. And it was always good. Other's would say to you, "Yeah, sure you need it tomorrow," and they'd bring in words on paper. Not Chris—Chris operated at one quality level. He gave you the best he could every time. He was really remarkable. He still is.

How did the New Mutants come about?
When I was editor-in-chief at Marvel, pretty much every day, the upstairs management would tell me *The X-Men* sells so well—let's make six more titles just like it. And every day, I would say, "No, the thing that makes *The X-Men* so good is that it has this great group of people working on it, and you can't clone them." I steadfastly resisted any proliferation of the X-Men franchise, unless Chris wanted to do it. And then when Chris started coming to me saying, "Hey, I've got an idea, we'll do a book that's about the kids," it was pretty hard to argue with him. Generally speaking, Chris initiated the proliferation of the X-Men franchise, with the exception of *X-Factor*, which was kind of rammed down his throat. When he had an idea it was pretty hard to resist him. To his credit, every one of the different X-books that he wrote had its own distinct personality. They weren't clones of *The X-Men*. He really found new areas to explore. With the *New Mutants*, he and Bill Sienkiewicz started doing all this crazy experimental stuff. You had to admire their daring. Basically Chris recruited Bill, who was blossoming as an artist at the time. You look at those books and they're crazy but they're great.

How did the team-up between the X-Men and the Teen Titans happen?
Before I started working at Marvel there was a Superman/Spider-Man team-up. Shortly after I became editor-in-chief Jenette Kahn called me up and asked me out to lunch. We were talking and we agreed that we should do a DC/Marvel team-up again and maybe even do it regularly. So we came up with the logical choices which were; Superman/Spider-Man again, Batman/Hulk, and then X-Men/Titans. We decided we were going to do this once a year and take turns producing them. The X-Men/Teen Titans Marvel produced. The book was in Chris's hands and when stuff was in Chris's hands I didn't nose into it that much because I knew that base was covered. So it was in capable hands and the entire creative team did a great job and it was a good book.

After you left Marvel, Chris did some stories for you at DEFIANT. How did that come about?
Chris and I were always fighting, always arguing at Marvel. We were always having this ongoing battle, and I think he was actually thrilled when I left Marvel. [*laughs*] But, all we would ever argue over was stories, which is what a writer and an editor ought to be doing. I had never done anything evil to him, or at least I hope I didn't. A couple of years after I left Marvel I ran into him at a convention. By that time we'd both been through some hard times, so we did a little commiserating, and kind of re-established the friendship. When I was starting DEFIANT the whole comic book business was in this incredible boom. When things are booming everybody has lots

FROM HLIDSKJALF, THE HIGH SEAT-- GAZING THROUGH THE CRYSTAL OF VISION-- THE LORD OF ASGARD CAN SEE ALL THERE IS TO SEE ON THE NINE WORLDS OF MORTAL MEN. IN THIS INSTANCE, A REPLAY OF THE RECENT BATTLE IN NEW YORK BETWEEN THE ASGARDIAN HOST, THE HEROES OF EARTH AND THE DEMON HORDES OF SURTUR.
I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND AT LAST THE FASCINATION THESE CREATURES HAVE FOR MY DOLTISH HALF- BROTHER, THOR.
THIS WOMAN, ORORO, HAS NO SPECIAL ABILITIES, YET SHE FIGHTS WITH A FIERCE COURAGE THAT WOULD DO THE LADY SIF PROUD.
HER NAME MEANS "BEAUTY" AND SHE IS IN TRUTH MOST PLEASING TO THE EYE, DESPITE HER DUSKY COLOR. LIKE ALL HEROES, SHE IS DEPRESSINGLY NOBLE...
...YET I SENSE WITHIN HER CONSIDERABLE PASSION, TOO LONG DENIED.
UNTIL RECENTLY, AS STORM, SHE LED A BAND OF MORTALS-- FROM THE OUTCAST CLAN CALLED MUTANTS-- KNOWN AS THE X-MEN. HER POWER TO CONTROL THE ELEMENTS ECHOES THOR'S-- BUT HERS HAS BEEN STOLEN, IT SEEMS FOREVER. SHE CANNOT FLY, POOR THING, WIND AND WEATHER ARE NO LONGER HERS TO COMMAND.
I WONDER WHAT PRICE SHE WOULD PAY TO GET THEM BACK...
...TO BECOME A GODDESS IN FACT AS WELL AS NAME?
2

Art Adams pencils, Terry Austin inks from *New Mutants* #1. © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

of work, and I couldn't get anybody to work. I had money to pay people, but everyone was busy. So I really needed some talent. At some point I had this book that had a strong female character and of course Chris is well-known for writing strong female characters. He was very busy but he did help me out and I think he was happy to work on a character that was pre-created that he could work his magic on. He wrote a couple issues of *Prudence and Caution* and did a great job.

Of the stories Chris has written do you have a favorite?
I think it was the *New Mutants* [#51] that he did with Kevin Nowlan. I thought that was terrific. I thought he did the "Days of Future Past" storyline [*The X-Men* 141–142] quite well. He was able to pull it off. Back in the sixties, I had done a *Legion of Superheroes* story that showed their future and tried to use that to create interest and suspense. Chris handled the concept a hell of a lot better than I did. He set up some stuff and you could see the progress toward it and I thought it was very nicely done. It was very difficult to do but he did it. Chris was able to maintain a very high level of quality for a very long time.

What type of editor/writer relationship did you have with Chris?
I wasn't doing a lot of hands-on editing when I was editor-in-chief. But when I was associate editor I did more. When I was working on Chris's scripts if I found something I thought needed to be changed and changed it myself, he'd go ballistic. Instead, he would say, "put an X in the margin beside what you want changed and I will change it." He didn't want anybody else's words. He said, "I'll do what you want, but I'll do it with my words." And that's exactly what I did. So Chris's scripts were easy to edit. I'd come to a place and I'd say, "Gee, he really hasn't introduced this character properly," and I'd put an X there. And Chris would come in and flip through the script, and say, "What's wrong here?" And I'd say, "Chris you have to introduce the character's name." He would understand what the problem was and he'd grumble off to the typewriter and fix it. Any time a second person looks at something they catch things that the person who wrote it didn't. He did not want you to change a word. He would make changes, but he wanted it to be his words. One time I put down in the margin some suggested copy and he wrestled with that for hours trying to find a better way to phrase it, and he finally gave up and used my words. And to this day, I think it upsets him. [*laughs*] ❖

LOUISE SIMONSON

What was Chris like to work with?
I loved working with Chris; I found him easy to work with. He was very professional—he always got his work in on time and it was always very good. He has a very fertile imagination and he rarely ran out of ideas. I really liked his stories. He had a real fine sense of dialogue, his plots were great and he had a wonderful sense of pacing. He had all the skills, and obviously I'm not the only one who thought so. You name something that's good about a writer and Chris was it. He is one of my favorite people I've ever worked with.

What was the relationship like plotting out the direction of the X-Men?
Chris pretty much handled that. My philosophy was, if it ain't broke don't fix it, and it certainly wasn't broke. We would occasionally have meetings about direction, but mostly I didn't have to do much. Chris is extremely creative and very prolific. Occasionally he would come into the office and he would say, "I don't have any ideas and I can't think of anything to write." And all I would have to do is mention something from a previous issue and that would be enough to get him started. Readers would complain that there were dangling plot threads but they really weren't; they were subplots that were pushed into the background. And all you had to do was remind him of one of them. He'd say, "Oh! I forgot about those!" Then he'd go home and you'd have another years worth of stories. It doesn't get any easier than that! [*laughs*]

Of the stories Chris wrote while you were editing the book, do you have a favorite?
I really liked the stories that Paul Smith drew. I think Chris and Paul Smith were a really nice combination. They worked really well together. Which is not to say I didn't like the other ones.

Are there any anecdotes you'd like to add?
When I first became editor at Marvel, Chris was doing the *X-Men* and *Man-Thing* and I was given both of his

books to edit. I started editing *X-Men* with the "Death of Phoenix" story line. I had been given the impression that Chris was difficult to work with. Once I started working with him I couldn't believe it. He was a dream to work with. You could ask him to make changes, and he would make them, usually without too much complaint, if he had been fed. [*laughs*] We had this great expense account back in the old days, and Chris would come into the office and he would hand me his stuff and he would want me to read it right there. This was a pleasure because it was always great. I could sit there and read it and there may be something little that needed to be changed and the best way to approach it was to take him out to dinner. If you asked him to make a change while he was hungry he would be grumpy. But if you fed him first, he would be mellow. [*laughs*] He was always much more cheerful after he'd eaten. I was actually able to use this discovery on my husband. I have discovered Walt is equally inclined to be more cheerful once he's eaten. [*laughs*] ❖

ANN NOCENTI

What do you feel is Chris's strongest point as a writer?
Chris Claremont is the most empathic writer I've ever worked with. He has the mutant ability to believe that fictional characters are real, and therefore he feels their pain and hears their thoughts. The X-Men, when he wrote them, were full, rich, emoting beings, much the way a child sprawled on the floor with his toys will have moments of delicious delusion when he or she thinks his toys are real. Say what you will about the method, it made for good stories. Chris is also a highly literate and educated person, and he drew on the best sources, Shakespeare, Dickens and the like, for inspiration for his stories.

Of the stories you worked on together, do you have a favorite?
I enjoyed many of the stories, but I do remember especially liking a solo Wolverine story Chris wrote and Barry Windsor-Smith drew; a simple tale set in a snowstorm with an amnesiac Logan and a little girl. Reducing Wolverine to blind instinct was a strong premise with which to reveal his character, and with his famous berserker rage rippling just under the surface, having that little girl trail after him added a nice tension. Barry's work was spectacular, including, as I remember, these wonderful fat snowflakes that fell on every page, and Barry did the coloring for that issue that was probably the best coloring work I'd ever seen in a simple four-color comic. But overall, more than individual stories (of which there were many great ones, and of a great variety, from small and intimate to grand and operatic), what I retain from working with Chris is a deep understanding and affection for those characters, the X-Men, and I was able to use that legacy myself when I recently wrote Prisoner X, an X-Men novel. Novels give you a chance to go deeply into character, and my sense of those characters comes largely from Chris's treatment of them. I think that all the X-Men writers that came on board after Chris's era owe a great deal to him.

There are a lot of different editor/writer relationships. How would you describe your working relationship/style with Chris?
We almost always started from scratch. A b.s. session was first, which had a lot to do with the pacing of a series. For example: Had we played with Storm lately? Was everyone (including us) forgetting about her claustrophobia, should we make that the center of a story? Had the X-Men, Mutants, whoever, been in alternate worlds and multi-part stories so long the readers needed a simple, grounded, one shot tale? Like a piece of music, if we'd been blasting the reader with full on orchestra for a while, maybe it was time for a solo flute. Then it was time for "How about . . . someone tries to steal Wolverine's skeleton?" Not bad. "How about . . . someone steals Storm's powers and then she falls in love with him?" Better, let's do both. "How about . . . Kitty Pride has to get braces and Magneto points a big magnet at the mansion and . . . nah. Next?" Etc. Then, usually Chris would go off and plot the story once we'd settled on a scattering of ideas, developed the character arcs, villain, battles and action for each story. In other words, it was a lot of planning and talking on the phone or at lunch, filling Chris's brain with possibilities, steering him away from anything that would violate or otherwise undignify a character, (like the time he wanted Xavier to (accidentally) end up in a dress and high heels), but for the most part he was right on the money.

Are there any anecdotes about Chris that you can share with us?
One of the keys to Chris's writing technique is that he always wrote with majestic, full orchestra music playing in the background. (Or so he'd tell me, and when I'd call him, I could usually hear it in the background). We had lots of fun working together. One of the most touching things Chris ever did was that when Art Adams and I created the Longshot series, Chris bought a beautiful painting Art Adams had done of Longshot and the gang, and presented it to me for my birthday or Christmas or something. Very sweet . . . or maybe it was a kick-back, I was never sure—ONLY KIDDING! [*laughs*]

X-M 214 13

LATER, UPSTAIRS...
MOST OF CEREBRO IS TO GO INTO STORAGE--PUT PERHAPS SOME COMPONENTS CAN BE CANNIBALIZED FOR OTHER SYSTEMS.
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.
YOU ON EDGE, BETTS?
A BIT--WHY
AIEEE!?!
SMK
GET AWAY FROM ME!
ARE YOU MAD, WOLVERINE?!
I'M A PSYCHO-BLASTER! MY FOCUSED TELEPATHIC FORCE PROJECTION COULD HAVE DISRUPTED YOUR BRAIN--CRIPPLED OR KILLED YOU!
MY RISK.
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, WHY?!
SABRETOOTH NAILED YOU, DARLIN'. I WANTED TO SEE IF YOU COULD BE CAUGHT OFF-GUARD AGAIN.
IF YOU'D TRULY BEEN AN ENEMY, WOLVERINE, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'D STILL BE ALIVE NOW TO PASS JUDGEMENT?
SABRE SURVIVED.
HE WAS LUCKY.
I DON'T LIKE PLAYING GAMES WITH MY POWERS.
ME NEITHER--BUT THE X-MEN ARE RIDIN' A REAL ROUGH ROAD.
IF I DON'T KNOW YOUR CAPABILITIES--SKILLS AND CHARACTER--
--I MIGHT MISJUDGE 'EM IN A SCRAP. THAT COULD COST US ALL.
BRIIP
XAVIER'S.
'LO, LILA.
TROUBLE WITH ALISON BLAIRE?
I'LL TELL ORORO.
WE'LL CHECK IT OUT.

Barry Windsor-Smith pencils, Bob Wiacek inks, from *X-Men* #214. *X–Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. *All rights reserved.*

BOBBIE CHASE

What do you feel is Chris's strongest point as a writer?
How about 2 strong points? 1)Brilliant subplots. Things that he introduces subtly in one plot, that boil under the surface and that eventually knock you in the head several issues down the line. And 2) characterization. Especially, of course, his strong female characters (a point of much teasing in the office)! The "Claremont woman" has gotten to be a cliche, but you can't argue with success. Rogue, Kitty Pryde, Storm—just a few of the great female characters who have benefited from the Claremont touch!

There are a lot of different editor/writer relationships. How would you describe your working relationship/style with Chris?
Full of the stuff that comics are made of: drama, tension, pathos, joy, antagonism, respect . . . It's a good tug of war, and I *think* we're both enjoying the challenge!

Of the stories Chris has written, do you have a favorite?
There are a lot of great Chris stories, too numerous to mention, so I'll just mention one that we worked on together—a recent issue of the *Fantastic Four*. Issue #22, S.W.A.K. (Sealed With A Kiss) had some terrific emotional tension for the characters, good mystery, new insights into old characters, good action . . . I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Salvador Larroca pencils, Art Thibert inks from *Fantastic Four* #24. © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

Artist's Alley

As Jim Shooter and Chris pointed out, Chris has had the opportunity to work with some of the best artists in the business; Art Adams, Terry Austin, John Bolton, John Byrne, Dave Cockrum, Michael Golden, Jim Lee, Rick Leonardi, Ron Lim, Frank Miller, Walt Simonson, Dwayne Turner—just to name a few. In this section we hear from two of those artists; Simonson and Cockrum. Then we present a gallery of work from many of the other artists.

Walt Simonson

How did you get involved in the X-Men/New Teen Titans crossover?
Very simply, actually. I was at Marvel one day, and I walked into Weezie's office (this is when she was still an editor there); Chris was in the office talking to her about the upcoming X-Men/Teen Titans book. As I was walking in, I heard, mumble mumble mumble Darkseid, mumble mumble mumble. And I said, if you guys are doing Darkseid, I'm drawing the book! And that's pretty much how it worked out.

At the time Dave Cockrum was pencilling the regular X-Men book and Weezie felt that he should get first crack at it. But I think Dave had his hands full doing the monthly book, so there was room for somebody else to come in to do the crossover. I pretty much volunteered myself when I heard the word Darkseid. Not that I don't love the X-Men or the Teen Titans, but I'm a big Darkseid fan and this gave me my first shot at drawing him.

The X-Men/Teen Titans book was the fourth crossover between Marvel and DC. Each company took turns providing the editorial staff and the production for each book. The other company basically had a liaison officer that would watch over the project and keep the that company's interests in mind. By the time it came to the X-Men/Teen Titans comic, it was Marvel's turn again. Which meant that Marvel supplied the editorial staff for it, picked the freelancers, and somebody at DC oversaw their interests in the matter; in this case it was Len Wein.

With Len's background on the X-Men he would seem the logical choice for the liaison.
He was. I remember we went to lunch one day, I was really game to do Darkseid—he seemed like the perfect match for Dark Phoenix. She was dead by that time, but of course every comic book character in the world gets killed only to come back. So we wanted to work out a story where we could use Darkseid and Dark Phoenix. Len's concern was that Darkseid was not a Titan's villain, whereas Dark Phoenix was an X-Men villain. He thought we should use a Titan's villain for balance, rather than one from the DC Universe in general. So we had a lunch with Chris, Weezie, Len, Marv Wolfman, and myself, and this came up.

At the time, the New Teen Titans had only run thirty or forty issues so it hadn't been around a long time. They really had only one cosmic villain, Trigon, who had the kind of background and powers to handle these two teams. I was there because I wanted to do Darkseid but Trigon was a red guy with four eyes and reindeer antlers as I remember and I had absolutely no interest in drawing him. This could have become a sticking point, but Marv suggested that we might be able to use Deathstroke The Terminator. It was a great suggestion because Deathstroke was a mercenary who worked for organizations, and Darkseid was a bad guy who used organizations. So it seemed a reasonable fit to have Deathstroke work for Darkseid. This gave us a DC Teen Titans villain we could put in the story and this was perfectly acceptable to Len. We could still use Darkseid, and nobody at Marvel cared that we were using two DC villains.

We had a great time doing the X-Men/Teen Titans book. I remember Chris was over one night and we were sitting around plotting out the story and trying to figure out how the issue would work, how we would get the teams together, and how we could bring Dark Phoenix back to life in a way that seemed reasonable. I thought Chris did a superb job of not only fitting it all together but also writing everybody in character, and there were a lot of characters in that book. That was a book I was really proud of and I'm sure Chris and Terry Austin, who inked it, are as well.

What other projects did you work on together?
I also did issue #171 of the *X-Men*, which of course Chris wrote. It's the one where Rogue comes over and starts becoming a good girl.

We first worked on a *Star Wars* story together [issues 53 and 54]. Marvel occasionally went through periods where they would decide to use up inventory. They would have stories that had been commissioned and then never used because books were cancelled. I helped Steven Grant

Walt Simonson pencils, Terry Austin inks. *Darkseid* © &TM 1999 DC Comics. *All rights reserved.*

convert a Tarzan story into a *Battlestar Galactica*. Marvel also had a John Carter of Mars story that Carmine Infantino had drawn. Chris and I took this story and turned it into a Star Wars story. We did this by making it into a two-issue story. We used as much of Carmine's artwork as we possibly could. We changed a couple of characters and I ended up drawing a good chunk of the second issue, and probably a little bit of the first. These transformations don't always make great stories, but they are challenging to do. And solving the puzzle is always fun.

What else would you like to add?
Chris was enthusiastic not only about his own work, but also about stuff you would show him. When I was doing Thor, I did a Balder story fairly early in my run. Balder had been a noble, but bland character, and I basically ran him through the ringer. I reached a point in the story where he was confronted by Loki, and Loki drives him nuts. So I had done a scene where Balder snaps and he pulls a knife on Loki, knocks him down, drives the blade into the floor beside his head and almost kills him. I showed Chris the plot. He read it, got to the end and said, "Gee I thought maybe he was really going to cut his head off." From that conversation, I realized that was the logical thing to have happen. It was the right payoff. Loki is a magical guy; it's quite likely that having his head removed might not kill him. So with Chris's inspiration, I worked out a scene where Balder did snap and cut Loki's head off. Loki wasn't materially affected but it drove Balder crazy!

Back in the seventies and early eighties people were always hanging around the offices trading ideas and Chris was always enthusiastic with that. He knew far more about the continuity than most of the rest of us did. He was very happy to jump in and offer ideas and provide inspiration, which I have to say I found extremely valuable. And used more than once! ❖

DAVE COCKRUM

How would the two of you work together?
The first time I was on the book we would kick a plot around together, I would take notes, and then I'd go home and work from my notes. When I came back after Byrne, we'd go to a plotting session, he'd take the notes, type them up and send them to me. So the first time there was probably more of me in the story than there was in the second, because I was interpreting the story the first time and he was interpreting it the second.

Chris and I were friends, and there really wasn't any trouble working together. I tended to want to have a sense of humor in the stories, and Chris didn't have one. But that was the only stumbling block.

Which way worked better, do you think?
Well, occasionally I would get stuck doing it my way. Whereas Chris usually provided enough material where I wouldn't have to get stuck. I remember one particular story where the X-Men have to come ashore on an island. I got real stuck trying to get them ashore from the hovercraft because the plot didn't really cover it. At the time, I was rooming with Jim Shooter and we kicked it around. I fussed and fidgeted and couldn't find a way to get them on the island. Finally someone had the idea, whether it was Jim or Roger Stern—who was there a lot—or myself, to blow up the hovercraft and then they had to come ashore.

You also worked together most recently on the Sovereign Seven?
There were five backup stories. DC thought it was kind of cute to reunite Chris and I. It was fun.

What was it about Chris's stories that you thought were good?
Well, he had a lot of great interpersonal relationships. Actually, Chris writes soap operas. He had all these intricate, interwoven plots. He had seventeen years of pretty good continuity on the X-Men. Of course he likes to write strong women, and personally I like strong women. So that was one of the appeals for me. He writes a rousing good story. I sometimes think they could be more humorous. In fact, when he created *Excalibur*, I think he did it to show that he could be humorous. [*laughs*]

* * * * *

On the next page is the cover to issue #24 of *Ms. Marvel*. This issue was never published; *Ms. Marvel* was canceled as of issue #23.

Dave Cockrum pencils, Terry Austin inks. *Ms. Marvel* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

Dwayne Turner pencils, Jerome Moore inks. *Sovereign Seven* © &TM 1999 Chris Claremont. *All rights reserved.*

George Perez pencils, Terry Austin inks. *X–Men* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. *All rights reserved.*

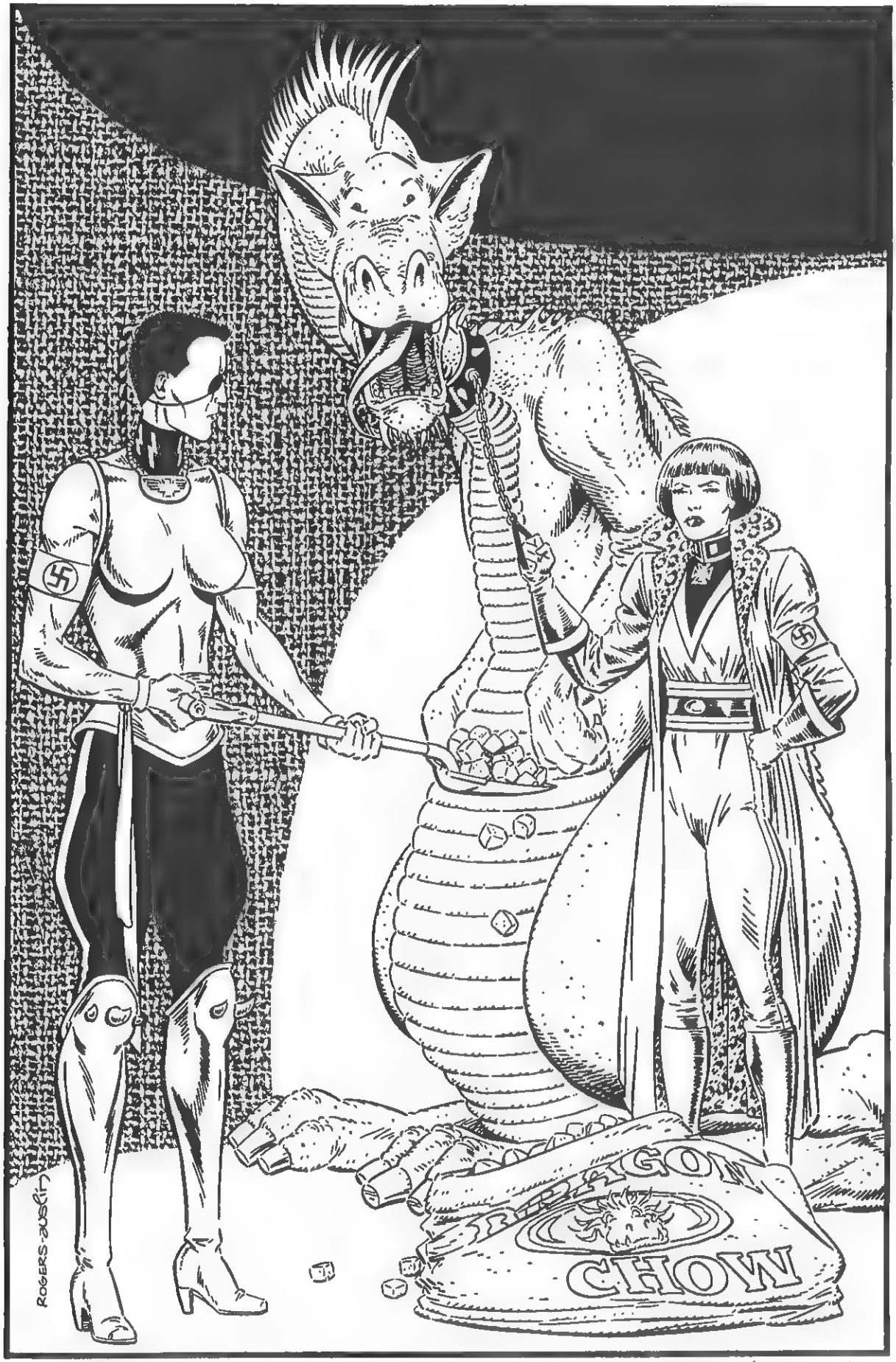
THAT YOUR SOLUTION FOR EVERYTHING, SHORTY?!
WHATEVER GETS IN YOUR WAY...
...CUT IT TO RIBBONS?!!
WORKS FOR ME, FLYBOY!
THEN LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU CAN TAKE...
...SOME OF YOUR OWN MEDICINE!
SHRAK!

Marc Silvestri pencils, Dan Green inks from X–*Men* #214. *X–Men* © *&TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

Frank Miller pencils, Josef Rubinstien inks from *Wolverine*#1. *Wolverine* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

BUT WHEN CODY SEES WHAT EMERGES FROM THAT LIGHT...
FATE BE BLESSED, MRYANTHE, WE ARE IN TIME!
WONDERFUL.
NOT ONLY AM I DYING, I'VE JUST GONE MAD AS A MARCH HARE!

Michael Golden pencils, Terry Austin inks from *Amazing Adventures* © &TM 1999 Chris Claremont and Michael Golden. All rights reserved.



Marshall Rogers pencils, Terry Austin inks. *Excalibur* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

Lady of the Silver Snows

THE DAY IS NEARLY OVER WHEN THE SENTRIES SIGHT A LONE RIDER APPROACHING FROM THE NORTH. IT IS AUTUMN, WITH SNOW ALREADY CARPETING THE PLAIN, AND THE LAST CARAVANS HAVE LONG-SINCE DEPARTED FOR THE TRADING CITIES OF ZAMORA AND TURAN. THIS LATE IN THE SEASON, A VISITOR TO THE INN OF THE BRIGHT LADY IS RARE, AS MUCH TO BE FEARED AS WELCOMED.
INSTINCTIVELY, WARRIORS REACH FOR THEIR WEAPONS AS WORD IS PASSED TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE DAYWATCH. ONE MAN IS PROBABLY NO THREAT, BUT ON THE FRONTIER, YOU DON'T TAKE CHANCES.
HE COMES SLOWLY, HIS MOUNT WEIGHED DOWN BY ITS DOUBLE BURDEN OF RIDER AND PACK AS WELL AS THE DISTANCE IT HAS TRAVELED. ONE OF HIS HANDS HOLDS THE REINS, WHILE THE OTHER RESTS LIGHTLY ON THE HILT OF HIS GREAT BROAD-SWORD.
EVIDENTLY, THE STRANGER IS AS TRUSTING A SOUL AS THE GUARDS WHO RUSH TO GREET HIM.

Story: CHRIS CLAREMONT **Art: VAL MAYERIK**

Val Mayerik art from *The Savage Sword of Conan* #74. *Conan* © &TM *1999 Conan Properties, Inc. All rights reserved.*

1969
X-MEN #59

1972
THE AVENGERS #102
THE INCREDIBLE HULK #148

1973
DAREDEVIL #102
DRACULA LIVES! #2,3
THE INCREDIBLE HULK #170
TALES OF THE ZOMBIE #2

1974
DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU SPECIAL #1
DRACULA LIVES! #4,5,8
GIANT SIZE DRACULA #2,3
HAUNT OF HORROR #2-4
MONSTERS UNLEASHED #4,9
TALES OF THE ZOMBIE #3,5,8
VAMPIRE TALES #6
WAR IS HELL # 9,10

1975
DAREDEVIL #117
THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #19
DEFENDERS #19
GIANT SIZE FANTASTIC FOUR #4
GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1
HAUNT OF HORROR #5
IRON FIST#1,2
MARVEL PREMIERE #23-25, 27
MARVEL PREVIEW #3
MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #24
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #9,10
MONSTERS UNLEASHED #10
MONSTERS UNLEASHED ANNUAL #1
PLANET OF THE APES #6
TALES OF THE ZOMBIE #9
X-MEN #94-96
VAMPIRE TALES #9
WAR IS HELL #11-15

1976
BLACK GOLIATH #2-5
CAPTAIN BRITAIN #1-10
CAPTAIN MARVEL #46
CHAMPIONS #4,5
DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #4
THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #20-24
THE INCREDIBLE HULK ANNUAL #5
IRON FIST #3-10
MARVEL CHILLERS #4
MARVEL CLASSICS COMICS (WAR OF THE WORLDS) #14
MARVEL PREVIEW #7
MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL #1
POWERMAN ANNUAL #1
X-MEN # 97-102

1977
THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #32-33
IRON FIST #11-15
MARVEL PREVIEW #11
MARVEL TEAM-UP #57-64
MS. MARVEL #3-12
POWER MAN #47-48
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #11
X-MEN #103-108

1978
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1986
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X-MEN CLASSIC #68–79
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1993
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1994
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1995
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1996
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SHOWCASE '96 #7
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1997
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1998
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MARVEL VISION #29
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SPIRIT JAM #1
WOLVERINE #125–128
X-MEN/ALPHA FLIGHT: THE GIFT TPB

1999
FANTASTIC FOUR #13–24

* * * * *

For the first time, *Comic Book Profiles* presents the eagerly asked for list of creators credits. Most of the information is from the *Comic Book Index* that was compiled by Johnny Lauck and John Barrett. For more information about this book, please see the announcement section of the letters page. Additional information was obtained through interviews with Chris Claremont and Jim Shooter, and from accessing the Grand Comic Book Database.

X-MEN VS. FAN. PAGE

Jon Bogdanove pencils, Terry Austin inks. *X–Men and the Fantastic Four* © &TM 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

CHRIS CLAREMONT

JOHN TOWNSEND

In the 24th edition of the Overstreet Price Guide, you had an article appear about the history of the X-Men. How did you come to write the article?
I like to write. I write books in my profession as a psychologist, and Gary Carter who works with Overstreet asked me one time if I would write an X-Men article. It wasn't because I had shown a particular interest in the X-Men. He just knew I liked to write, since I had written several articles for his *Comic Book Marketplace*. So I did not start off a major X-Men fan.

Did you become one from writing the article?
I have to admit that I did.

Why was that?
Well, particularly because of Chris Claremont. I had always seen the X-Men as a Fantastic Four wannabe group. Younger, not as strong, still under the authority of a teacher, so I hadn't had a lot of interest in them. But then when I began researching the article I got to *X-Men* #94 and all of a sudden the whole team opened up for me and I began getting engrossed and hypnotized by this group that I really couldn't have cared less for before Claremont.

What did Chris do that made you so interested in the book?
I think it was several things. Chris is a writer, and successful writers tend to do one of two things, and I think he does both of those things just about better than anybody. Some successful writers are great about plotlines. You'll read a great story that has a lot of intricate twists, and these plotlines can just fascinate you. But while a lot of writers are good at plot, they're not very good with character development. Other writers are the reverse. Chris has the gift of doing both. So while you're really interested in where the plot is going you're also getting to know these very real and complex characters whose lives are very much like yours and whose relationships are fascinating. You don't have a chance with Claremont—he hooks you one way or the other.

Chris demands a lot of dedication from his readers. You really can't enjoy him unless "you jump in the water with him." He requires more of the reader than a lot of writers.

You're a psychologist. When you were reading these stories, did you read them with a professional eye?
You can't really escape it with Claremont—he's a shrink's dream. [*laughs*] You have Cyclops who is guilt-ridden over all of his aggression and hurting people.

Art Adams pencils, Terry Austin inks from *Classic X-Men* #15. *X-Men* © &TM 1999 *Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

Rogue wants to be touched yet she can't be because she'll destroy someone else. Wolverine has an impulse disorder who's trying to reign in all his hatred. Then of course there are all the conflicts they would have with one another. You just sit there and put them on the couch and listen to them. [*laughs*]

Of the storylines do you have a favorite?
"Days of Future Past" in *X-Men* #141–142. I think that's when Chris started to hit his stride. Chris says that's when he began the canon. He began to intensely deal with the essential issues that this was not a superhero group fighting villains. This was not just good guys versus bad guys. These were people that are hated by the entire world that they're supposed to save because of who they are. They're being persecuted and attacked—how do you deal with that? All of a sudden you had a gripping storyline that you had never seen before yet one you could identify with if you had ever been persecuted or cast out or cast-off in a relationship. ❖

Chris Claremont: Writer Auteur

by Link Yaco

There are few creative talents in comics that are known for their writing. Artists are the great auteurs of this profession. There were Jack Kirby and Will Eisner in the '40s, Al Williamson and Wally Wood in the '50s, and Neal Adams and Jim Steranko in the '60s. After that, the field expanded enormously and it's harder to localize specific focal points of talent. Perhaps we could point to John Byrne in the late '70s to early '80s, Todd McFarlane in the late '80s to early '90s, and Rob Liefeld in the '90s. Of course, the field was huge once before, during the great post-war boom that ended with the Kefauver hearings, but few creators were credited, and in any event, most of them were people with no love for medium. They spewed the work out as fast as possible while they worked to escape the ghetto of comics.

Seldom have writers become drawing cards. There are only a few: There were Will Eisner—who was as much a writer as an artist, in the '40s and '50s—Al Feldstein and Harvey Kurtzman in the first half of the '50s. There were Stan Lee—who revolutionized comics in the '60s, and later that same decade—Roy Thomas, and Denny O'Neil—who topped Lee's realism with social relevancy. That's about it. Oh, and then came Chris Claremont. Yes, people bought comics because Claremont *wrote* them, not because some major talent drew them. For almost two decades, his name on a book brought in an audience.

In the early '70s, when Steve Englehart and Len Wein's stars were rising, Claremont was doing minor text pieces for the Marvel monster books. But then in 1975, he took the Lee-Kirby X-Men, which were minor sellers, and re-invented them. The huge popularity the X-Men enjoy today is largely due to Claremont's innovations. This is not to detract from the other creators who also made large creative contributions to the X-Men and the illustrators that Claremont worked closely with, especially John Byrne, who was a writer of merit by himself. That might be one of Claremont's major talents—the ability to work closely with the artistic half of the creative team on a book. However, Claremont remains unique in his status as a fan favorite WRITER.

As the field expanded, in the '70s, no other single voice stood out. There were major writers, to be sure. Gerry Conway, Steve Englehart, Len Wein, and many others, all had marquee value. However, while they all did remarkable work, they also moved around a lot. But Claremont stuck with the X-Men and came into his own. Starting in 1975, he wrote Marvel's *The Uncanny X-Men* for seventeen years! One of the ingredients to his success was that he stuck with a single property and developed it enormously. This allowed him to become identifiable to his audience, and to develop his personal style in a single specific direction. He created a detailed and coherent universe. Every feature of the Xavier Mansion became

familiar to us. The narrative grew richly complex as the characters' lives became entwined by romance, family, and antagonism. Protagonist and antagonist would repeatedly engage, each time with a deepening of character and history.

I once asked Claremont how he approached plotting a book. Claremont is a highly educated craftsman who is thoroughly grounded in the mechanics of narrative structure but his answer was somewhat lackadaisical. He said that it was pretty much one-act stuff—move the characters on stage, and have them fight. So much for structure.

His concern was, evidently, more with character. And that is what pulled us in. Under his direction, the X-Men became complex personalities and the real conflicts, the real narrative structure, were not in how they whupped Magneto's butt, but how they came to terms with their own inner turmoil.

However, what sustained Claremont's lengthy run was his steady stream of invention. New characters and new devices flowed from him constantly. The series never grew formulaic. He laid out so many ideas that they are still being developed to this day. To many, today's X-Men are simply variations on the themes that he, along with Byrne, introduced.

The X-Men issues 129 to 137 detailed the seminal Dark Phoenix Saga which ended with the "death" of Phoenix, Jean Grey. Around that same time, he also helped create many characters such as the Dazzler, Shadowcat, and the Alpha Flight group, although we shouldn't overlook Dave Cockrum's initial contribution of Banshee, Storm, and Nightcrawler.

Perhaps the only writer auteur to develop since Claremont has been Alan Moore. Sadly, Moore has been unable to sustain and diversify his energies the way Claremont has. However, let's not count him out yet!

Claremont has, of course, done a lot more than just the X-Men. He has written several novels, which distinguishes him from other comics writer auteurs. Gardner Fox, who came close to being an auteur force in the Silver Age, wrote many novels, but they weren't intrinsically linked with his comics oeuvre. Stan Lee has co-written a number of books, but the key word there is "co-written." Claremont has also become a major editorial force and successfully brought his special talents to many different books, including his current work on the Fantastic Four. ❖

STEVEN TICE

As a writer, what do you think is Claremont's biggest strength?
Chris Claremont's most obvious strength has always been characterization. One reason he's proven so adept at handling team books is that he has a very specific and detailed picture of each character's personality, and is capable of balancing a variety of personalities within a group.

Is there a particular Claremont story that you find memorable and if so why?
I could easily have chosen "Days of Future Past" or the Dark Phoenix saga as the most memorable Claremont moment, but I'm sure plenty of other people have mentioned those. Instead, I'm choosing *X-Men* #102. Why? Well, it was one of the first comic books I ever read, and the first *X-Men* comic I read. But I'm really choosing *X-Men* #102 because, even though it's just an "ordinary" issue, and the middle part of a storyline at that (the X-Men battling Black Tom Cassidy and the Juggernaut), Claremont's writing skills are fully evident. Every character has a unique speech pattern, attitude, and background, which serves to make the already diverse group stand out even more as individuals. There are also flashbacks to Storm's childhood, and it is typical of Claremont that her story not be the stereotypical "origin" story, but instead the tale of an orphaned child struggling to make her way in the world, even if that required thievery. But perhaps most amazing is that, in remembering this issue, what I remember most is the interaction of the characters, the way their distinct personalities either clashed or meshed in unique ways—when in fact the entire issue is one extended fight scene! It has been said that conflict is the key to strong fiction because it forces characters to react to adversity. In a great many superhero comics, however, the conflict itself is all there is to it, Generic Hero X pitting his superpowers against Generic Villain Y's superpowers. But Chris Claremont, even in his earliest stories, was using conflict as a basis for examining the personalities of his characters. *X-Men* #102 exemplifies these aspects of his writing.

Back Issues *of* Comic Book Profiles!

❑Back Issues Please! (All prices include shipping and handling charges) Each issue contains a lengthy interview with the featured subject, over a dozen supporting interviews, and an original cartoon by Fred Hembeck. Issues 1 (Joe Kubert) and 2 (Bernie Wrightson) are sold out but the following are still available.

❑**Neal Adams—$3.50** This issue's supporting interviews include, Terry Austin, Brian Bolland, John Byrne Harlan Ellison, Dick Giordano, Dan Jurgens, Joe Kubert, Jerry Ordway, and Roy Thomas

❑**John Romita—$3.50** This issue's supporting interviews include, Gerry Conway, Stan Lee, Graham Nolan, John Romita, Jr., Jim Shooter, and Roy Thomas. **Note: Quantities are limited.**

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WHO ARE THEY?

Bobbie Chase She has edited many Marvel titles including the *Fantastic Four*. She can be seen giving editorial advice to Howard Mackie in the *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics* book.

Dave Cockrum Dave created the *Futurians* and co-created the new X-Men. Before pencilling the *X-Men*, Dave pencilled the *Legion of Super Heroes* for DC. He is currently pencilling *Soul Searchers* for Claypool Comics.

Fred Hembeck Regular contributor to *CBP*, as well as other comic publications including the *Comics Buyer's Guide*. Recently his work has appeared in the *Green Lantern Secret Files #2* and *The Hulk Annual*.

Tony Isabella "Tony's Tips" appears weekly in the *Comics Buyer's Guide* and daily on-line. He also created Black Lightning and recently co-authored a Captain America novel.

Stan Lee The co-creator of the Marvel Universe! His latest endeavor is Stan Lee Media.

Ann Nocenti Ann was the X-editor during the mid 1980's.

Mike Pascale Creator of *Bru-Hed* and *Nasti: Monster Hunter*. Both are published by Schism Comics.

Jim Shooter Jim broke into comics at an early age and was quickly writing the Legion of Superheroes at DC. He eventually went to work at Marvel where he was editor-in-chief for many years. Afterwards he manned the helm at DEFIANT Comics, Valiant Comics, and Broadway Comics.

Louise Simonson She was an editor for both Warren Comics and Marvel Comics. She left editing to become a freelance writer and since that time has written various titles for DC and Marvel.

Walter Simonson Walter has been both writer and artist on a variety of projects for both DC and Marvel including *Thor* and the *Fantastic Four*. DC recently collected the ground breaking Manhunter series that he worked on with Archie Goodwin.

Steven Tice The publisher and editor of Musings from Calliope Comics.

John Townsend Author and psychologist, John has written numerous articles about comics and at one time had a regular column in the *Comic Book Marketplace*

Len Wein Former editor-in-chief at Marvel and editor at DC. Len has written many titles for both companies.

Marv Wolfman Marv wrote the classic Crisis on Infinite Earths series as well as co-creating The New Teen Titans. His production company is currently producing Pocket Dragon Adventures and is developing an Elfquest movie.

Link Yaco He has written comic books for several publishers. His collected "Spacechicks and Businessmen" is due from Fantagraphics sometime in the year 2000. He is currently working on a comics-related paperback for a major publisher.

JimAparo

Don't miss our issue on Jim Aparo! We cover his days at Charlton to DC Comics, his phenomenal output on such characters as: the Phantom Stranger, Aquaman, The Spectre, Batman, and his work today.

Join his friends and colleagues as they reminiscence about this extraordinary artist.

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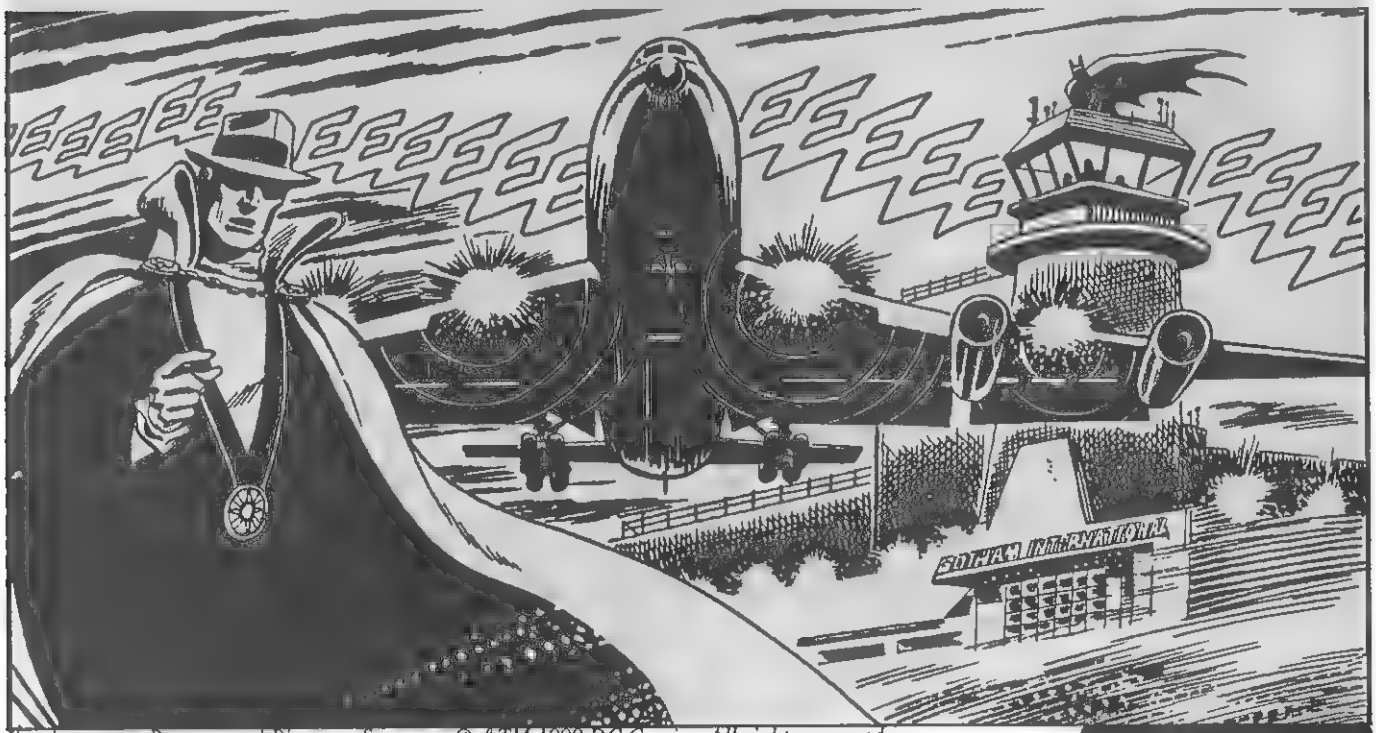


Jim Aparo art. *Batman and Phantom Stranger* © &TM 1999 DC Comics All rights reserved.

MiKE'S MEANDERiNGS

by Mike Pascale

Do you believe in reincarnation? I don't. But every now and then, something comes along that makes you think twice. Two people, past and present, with similarities too close for coincidence.

Like Chris Claremont. This may sound nuts, but I believe the soul of another famous Chris may be inhabiting his body.

That guy is Chris Columbus—no, not the director of *Home Alone*—I mean the famous Genoese seaman who sailed the ocean blue in 1492.

Now before you have me committed, consider the following:

1. ***Both are famous for their discoveries—or more appropriately, re-discoveries.***

Columbus wasn't the first to travel to the American continent, but he was the first to discover it for a whole new world of people and open up a brand new trade route which had never been seen before.

Chris Claremont wasn't the first to write superhero comics, nor the first to write *X-Men*. But he introduced mutants to a whole new world of readers (remember, Marvel ran reprints for years—27 issues—before Chris and Dave Cockrum reintroduced them). He basically rediscovered the entire *kid-team* concept and he did it in a way that no one had seen before. Couple that with Dave's marvelous (pun intended) character designs/storytelling and you can easily see why those books made such a splash. (That one not intended.)

2. ***Both were great explorers.***

Christopher Columbus didn't just make one journey to America and call it quits. After his first famous trip, he continued voyaging to the New World for twelve more years till he died, discovering new lands (Santo Domingo, Honduras, Costa Rica, et al.) each time.

Likewise, Claremont continued exploring new and different ways to tell stories about heroes of all kinds—from *Marvel Team-up* to *Marvel Girl*—for his entire career. And with *Sovereign Seven*, Mr. C. proved he still had even more to discover. For twenty-five years he's been exploring his written world, much longer than ol' Columboy—and shows no signs of slowing down. (Just check out his work on another long-running and rebooted team, the Fantastic Four.)

3. ***Both were revolutionary in there respective fields.***

Columbus revived and popularized the ancient Greek knowledge that the world was round, which was pretty radical stuff back then.

Our Mr. Claremont revolutionized team comics and did some pretty radical things himself.

Consider all the foreign members in the X-books. His mutants were truly international in a way that hadn't been done in mainstream comics (in fact, I needed an atlas and foreign phrase dictionary to fully appreciate those tales!)

How about killing off one of the members in just the third appearance of the team? Definitely unheard of. (More on that later.) Plus the many unique things he did with *Excalibur* and **New Mutants*.

And remember his run on *Iron Fist* (which I mentioned in my column on John Byrne in *CBP* #5)? To this day, that series still resonates with me—especially the whole 2nd person-narrative technique, another *exploration* which helped *open up* the comic-book world.

4. ***Both men's achievements helped establish world powers.***

Columbus's discoveries led to many great things—including the creation of our modern-day American *empire*.

And Claremont? Marvel has since built *their* empire on what Chris and Cockrum (and Byrne) did all those years ago. More important, though the company's still reaping the benefits today, it was Marvel's mishandling and near-overkill of that concept/character foundation that all but did them (and our industry) in several years ago—just as the abuse of Columbus's discoveries spelled near extinction for the American Indian population. Though you can't compare genocide with going Chapter 11, you get the idea—both groups are still feeling the after-effects.

5. ***Both were influential superstars of their time.***

Columbus was *da Man* of his fellow explorers and his reputation grew substantially. Countless others have since added to and benefited from his explorations and discoveries.

So, too, did Claremont's reputation among fans and pros

grow to *superstar* status; while Neil Gaiman was still dreaming about his first leather jacket, Chris was one of the first true *cult heroes* of comics, gaining legions of fans eager to buy anything with his name on it. Countless writers (and artists) have since taken what Claremont and his cohorts had *discovered* in those noted books and made entire careers for themselves (along with some pretty good—as well as bad—comic books).

6. ***Both did bad things to Indians—sort of.***

As we now know, Christopher Columbus wasn't a very open-minded or peaceful guy; tragically, he enslaved and killed many of the natives he encountered on his travels.

Luckily, Chris Claremont *is* an open-minded and peaceful guy and never killed or enslaved *anyone* (though he may want rub *me* out after he reads this!) But he did "kill" one Indian *character!*

That was Thunderbird, the colorfully-costumed, flippant, perpetually P.O.ed Native American character in the *original new* X-Men. He met his maker(s) after just three appearances! (I think they even changed his costume in that brief period! How can you kill a guy after he gets new duds?)

The reason I heard was that he was just too much like Wolverine and the team simply didn't need another. That may be, but dang it, *this* 12-year-old *loved* that cranky ol' *Injun*! I mean, what was wrong with two angry guys on the team?! Couldn't he just *okay, okay* I know. It's been 25 years—let it *go* already. Sigh.

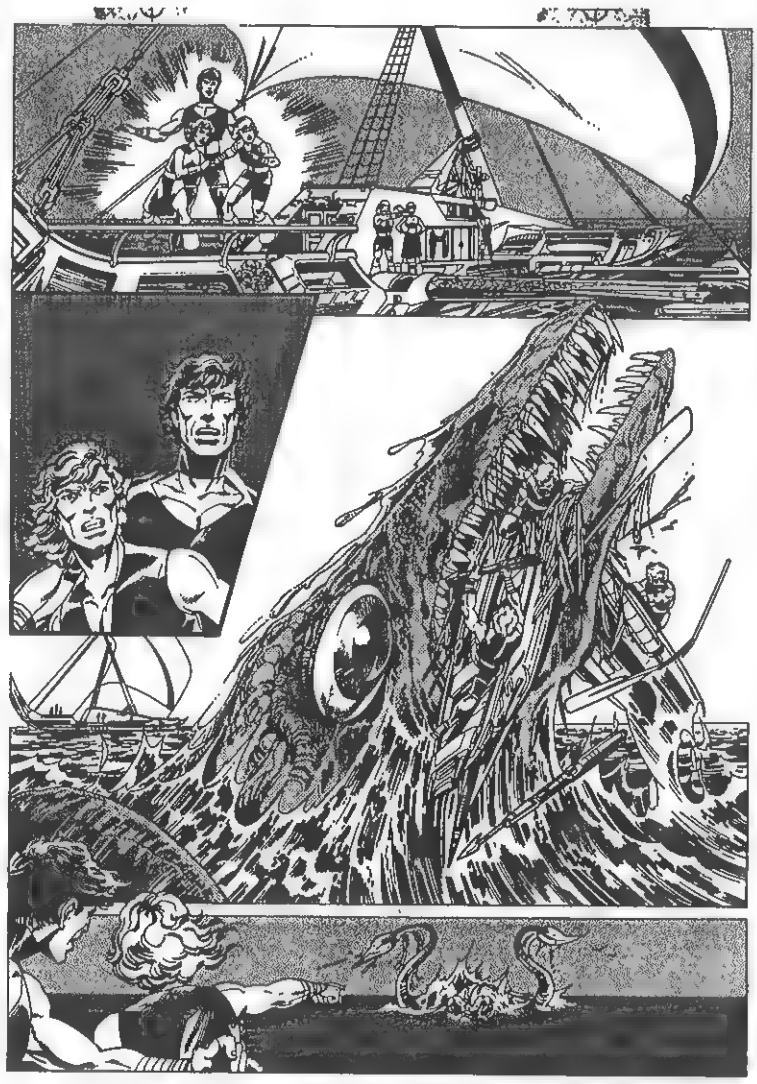
7. ***Both men and their contributions will never be forgotten.***

Today, almost five hundred years after he became fertilizer, more people know the name Christopher Columbus and his accomplishments than ever did while he was alive.

Thankfully for us, Chris Claremont (the *nice* Chris), is still with us, will *be* with us for a long time to come, and his ever-fertile mind is still creating tomorrow's memorable achievements in our field.

Oh yeah—one last eerie similarity (the strangest of all): Columbus borrowed money from Queen Isabella to finance his expedition. I don't know for sure, but I heard Chris Claremont once borrowed lunch money from *Tony* Isabella.

Now do you believe in reincarnation? ❖



John Byrne pencils, Terry Austin inks. *Star-Lord* © &TM 1999 *Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.*

Announcements

We hope that you enjoyed the special issue, the Archie Goodwin Tribute issue, that we put out between issues seven and eight. If you missed that issue, you still have the opportunity to get it from us, there are still some copies available. Additionally there are still copies of 3 through 7 available; however issue #4 on John Romita, Sr. is in very short supply.

As you saw for the first time we brought you a creator credits list. This had been the most asked for addition to the magazine. Most of the information used for this checklist was supplied by Johnny Lauck and John Barrett, authors of the *Comic Book Index*. Although the *Comic Book Index* is currently out of print, there are some copies remaining in the inventory of Bud Plant, Cold Cut and Diamond distributors. The book contains the credits to 15,000 author and illustrators for 50,000 comics. Recently the project hit 80,000 comics indexed with work by more than 20,000 creators. A new edition of the book will be released in the year 2000. You can get on their e-mail list for more details by writing JDLauck@aol.com.

Another place to look for creator credits is the Grand Comic Book Database. This database is located at http://www.comics.org

This issue contains a wide variety of original artwork from many different artists. We obtained the artwork from a variety of contributors, many of whom are members of the Comicart-L list. The home page for the list is located at http://www.theartboard.com/comicart-l/index.html. While there you can check out the Lowry Gallery where many of the members showcase their original artwork. If you like original comic book art, and you have not checked this out, you really should.

As you know we are always open to suggestions to improve the magazine. Please let us know how we are doing. Are there any other features you would like to see added? (Or removed for that matter.) Also, check out our web site and let us know what you would like to see there.

LETTERS

We've expanded the letters page so we would have room to accommodate your thoughts on both the Michael Kaluta issue and the tribute issue on Archie Goodwin. So without further ado . . .

Hi,
I just saw your website . . . and I wanted to thank you especially for putting together an issue featuring Mike Kaluta. As for other creators I'd like to see covered in your magazine, they would include Paul Chadwick, Mark Schultz, Charles Vess, Barry Windsor-Smith, P. Craig Russell, Gary Gianni, Al Williamson, Stan Sakai, Frank Miller, and probably some others that don't immediately spring to mind. (Thanks for already doing a Bernie Wrightson issue, too).

I really liked the web links section you have broken down by artists; I wasn't aware of *any* Mike Kaluta-related links until I saw them on your page.

And please do whatever you have to in order to keep Fred Hembeck in your magazine. I'm a big Hembeck fan and was delighted when he started appearing in the pages of CBG again.

Many thanks for your time and effort,
Scott Conner
Blacksburg, VA

We're big fans of Fred's work also! I hope you were able to get copies of Green Lantern Secret Files #2 and the recent Hulk Annual. Both of which featured Fred's work. The link section was the idea of Ted Latner—our web master. We think he does a great job of finding and updating the links.

Dear Comic Book Profiles,
I would like to take this opportunity to complement you on the high caliber of your publication. I really enjoy the in-depth focus you're able to give each comic book professional in each issue. By managing to get interviews with so many friends and colleagues, as well as with the subject himself, the reader gets a very informative and entertaining look at the person in question. The interviews never seem staid or stuffy. On the contrary, they read like you're almost there in the room with the subject and are part of a casual conversation. As an illustrator, I love the parts of the interviews that deal with technique and professional experiences, but I also greatly enjoy the anecdotes and stories about their lives.
The design of *Comic Book Profiles* seems to get better with

each issue. I appreciate the reprinting of pages that an artist specifically refers to in the text of the interview but especially enjoy the unpublished and unofficial sketches that most readers would not have access to. If you're still looking for feedback on whether or not to add color to the magazine, I personally don't see the need for that added expense since all of the artists have been primarily pencillers and inkers.

Keep up the great work and best wishes for continued success!

Mei-Yi Chun
Mei-Yi, were are glad that you are enjoying the different aspects of the magazine. We consistently try to put out a publication that appeals to the broadest range of people. So whether you want personal reminiscences, technical pointers, or examples of unpublished artwork, we have the bases covered.

Hello,
First of all, the new cover is very cool! Issue 7 was (as always) very good and very consistent. I didn't realize that the studio roommates weren't getting along very much (by the way, I have never seen their book, *The Studio, is* it that good?).

What I like is the fact that the interview covers everything (from personal life to drawing tips). The time line at the beginning of the issue (very helpful). Suggestions: 1) A photo of the artist (I know it's a bit silly but not all of us have the chance to know him and I'd hate to walk beside him without recognizing him). 2) A comprehensive list of their work (it wouldn't have be too hard for Kaluta since he has it).

Frederic Massa

Frederic, let me start by apologizing for editing your well thought out letter. As you can see, we have started with the credit list this issue. Photos are the next thing on our list to include. Although next issue we do have a drawing of Jim Aparo for our front cover by Graham Nolan. The Studio is a wonderful book. It is out of print but you can usually find a copy being sold on eBay.

Dear People,
Well, you've proved that even when you're doing an artist I'm NOT all that mad about, you STILL do an issue that's fascinating from cover-to-cover.

I will admit I have EVERY ISSUE of DC's 1970's *Shadow* series (even the ones by Frank Robbins— how'd *he* get in there????). And I have the graphic novel from Marvel (say what you want, I *loved* Russ Heath's inks— you could do with an issue dedicated to *his* art!!!).

However— looking through some old magazines, I ran across an ad for a Shadow graphic novel— from 1981! It was called "Dragon Shadows," illustrated by Kaluta & written by Harlan Ellison!! I was really surprised this was mentioned nowhere in your issue. Did this book actually exist, and what's the story on it, if any? (This is what happens when you have an uncontrollable urge to do "series indexes" for your collection . . .)

Henry R. Kujawa
Henry, it has always been our goal to have people willing to buy the magazine, even if it is for a creator that may not be a personal favorite, just because they like the format of the magazine. The same way I'll watch a Biography on A&E even though it might be about someone I'm not interested in. About the story you mention, we asked Michael about this and he said, "It never happened. The most ever done on it was two pages by Dennis Fujitaki, three pages written by Harlan Ellison and an Ad Painting (Marionettes) used by The Comics Journal and still available as a limited print."

Now on to comments about the Goodwin issue.

Hi, Tina . . .
I just wanted to say thanks for the copy of your Archie tribute! I am thrilled and honored to be a part of this collection of memories!

Thanks!
Mike Carlin

Dear Tina,
I read the tribute to Archie from cover to cover. What a beautiful tribute to a beautiful man! Your issue definitely did justice to this talented man and what he stood for. I enjoyed the artwork sprinkled throughout and was especially pleased with the "Mr. Nice" saying good bye to Mike, Denny and Bruce placed between the interviews of Denny and Mike.

Marifran O'Neil

Hi,
Thanks so much for another fantastic issue! Brought a tear or two to my eye.

Best!
Tim Townsend

letters

To Profiles
It occurred to me that for all the well deserved praise I have heaped on *Comic Book Profiles* in my review column in the *Comic Book Network Electronic Magazine* I had not taken the time to write directly to your office to express my appreciation for your fine publication. Your latest effort, the Tribute to Archie Goodwin, moved me to send a few comments your way.

As I have said many times, the format of *CBP* is very well suited for the task at hand. I have always admired the work of Mr. Goodwin be it his writing or editing. I could always count on any work with the name Archie Goodwin attached to it to be the best it could possibly be. Reading all the testimonials from so many people who essential said the same thing, that Archie brought out the best in everyone he dealt with, reaffirmed what I knew already. Those who look to sports figures, celebrities, or even politicians (yuch) as role models would do well to examine the life of this hard working family man who always strove for excellence.
On that subject, I find it sad that there are several such examples of hard working, morally upright people in the comic industry and yet the biography programs on TV focus on rock stars, movie actors and politicians. Archie would be a perfect subject for such a show as would Jack Kirby, Stan Lee, and the other founding fathers of the comic book medium in America. How about sending comp subscriptions of CBP to the producers on A&E's *Biography* to give them the idea? Just a thought.

As to my picks for subjects to profile in the future I would like to see you do someone in the not so mainstream for a change of pace. R. Crumb might be interesting for example or maybe Richard Corben? And, for someone who certainly had an impact on the industry in his career I would welcome a profile on Jim Shooter.

Keep up the good work and we'll keep telling everyone we can to check it out.
David LeBlanc
Editor of the ComicBook Net Electronic Magazine
Thank you for those kind words David. You owe it to yourself to check out the Comic Book Electronic magazine. The web page is at http://members.aol.com/ComicBkNet. There you can check out the current or back issues of the magazine. You may also subscribe to the magazine at the website. It comes out once a week, on Friday evenings. There are reviews, news, interviews, Tony Isabella's Tips column—there is even a trivia contest with occasional questions pulled from CBP! I usually wait and start off my Saturday morning by reading CBEM.

Dear People,
Great work, as usual. (Umm— why was this not part of the regular numbering of issues?)
One thing that seems sure about Archie Goodwin is that when it came to editorial "styles", his was the kind I prefer. And it seems to me that of all the editors who've ever worked in the comic-book biz, he may have been the one I would have most liked to have worked with.

I was at least lucky enough to meet him once, at a convention in Philadelphia. I got him to sign a copy of VAMPIRELLA #13 for me. It was Jose Gonzales' debut on the character, and remains to this day my favorite VAMPI story. And my favorite Archie Goodwin story as well! I've always wished Archie had stuck around on series he wrote longer— he always seemed to be moving on too quickly.

Anyway, that day I had some pages for a book I was working on about a pro wrestler-turned-costumed hero. Since it wasn't anything related to any of the characters at the company he was working at (this was mid-'86—I guess that would have been Epic just then) he couldn't offer me any work based on what I was showing him. But he took time to offer some encouraging comments. In particular, he told me my fight choreography was realistic and believable, which he said too many such fights in comics WEREN'T. I took that as high praise! This is why I was so delighted (but not altogether surprised) when I read that Archie was a fan of pro wrestling! Whatta ya know . . .
More editors in the biz should take example from him. Maybe the industry would have a better "attitude" across-the-board.

Sincerely,
Henry R. Kujawa
Hello again Henry. We decided that we wanted to put the Archie Goodwin issue out as a special since it was going to be larger than our normal format, the content was going to be different than normal, and because the entire issue was being done for charity. We also hope that we will continue to be able to bring you some type of special project each summer. We are already making plans for next summer and will be announcing those soon.

That's all the room I have this time. If you send us one that we haven't asked him yet and we use it in the magazine, you get a free copy of the magazine.

See you in 90!

HEMBECK'S FINAL THOUGHTS

ANYBODY WHO WORKS IN THIS BUSINESS CAN TELL YOU, COMICS HAS ITS SHARE OF *UPS* AND *DOWNS*. THE UPS ARE *GREAT*, BUT BELIEVE ME, YOU *NEVER* FORGET THE *DOWNS*. I CERTAINLY WON'T FORGET A CRUCIAL LOW-POINT *EARLY* IN MY SO-CALLED CAREER, NOR THE FELLA WHO DRAGGED ME OUT OF IT: *CHRIS CLAREMONT*.

IT'S LIKE *THIS*: I WAS FRESH OUT OF COLLEGE IN THE SUMMER OF '77, AND I'D PREPARED A PORTFOLIO OF STANDARD SUPER-HERO ART IN HOPES OF SNARING SOME WORK AT ONE OF THE *FEW* AVAILABLE PUBLISHERS OF THE DAY. IN RETROSPECT, I'LL ADMIT, YEAH, IT *WASN'T* GREAT STUFF, BUT I *STILL* CONTEND, IT WASN'T *HORRIBLE*, EITHER.

SEEMINGLY, I WAS *ALONE* IN THAT OPINION, BECAUSE *ALL* WHO SAW IT--WHETHER LEAVING IT AT THE MARVEL OFFICES OVERNIGHT (AN *IFFY* PROPOSITION, I NOW REALIZE), OR MAILING OFF SELECTED COPIES TO FIRMS LIKE CHARLTON AND CONTINUITY--*PASSED* ON UTILIZING MY SERVICES WITH A POLITE "NO THANKS". IN ALL, I ONLY MANAGED TO SECURE A *SINGLE* FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW.

IT WAS MY *LAST* STOP, AND, oh BROTHER, LEMME TELL YA, AT THE *TIME*, IT SURE *SEEMED* LIKE THAT IN *MORE* WAYS THAN ONE!!

DC'S ART DIRECTOR AT THAT TIME WAS *VINCE COLLETA*, AN ARTIST WHOSE WORK, IN *MY* INFORMED FAN-BOY MIND, I'D *LONG* CONSIDERED *SUBSTANDARD* IN BOTH QUALITY *AND* IN EFFORT, AND I WAS *STUNNED* WHEN I BELATEDLY REALIZED *HE* WOULD BE THE ONE JUDGING THE MERITS OF *MY* WORK! I WAS *DOUBLY* STUNNED SHORTLY THEREAFTER WHEN HE PRONOUNCED, IN *NO* UNCERTAIN TERMS (*AND* SOMEWHAT *CRUDE* ONES) THAT I HAD ABSOLUTELY *NO* FUTURE IN THE FUNNY BOOK FIELD. *NONE*. ZILCH. ZIPPO. THANKS FOR YOUR TIME, FELLA--NOW, *ON YOUR WAY!*

GUESS WHAT, FOLKS? I WAS *CRUSHED!* MAYBE HAD IT BEEN *JOHN ROMITA* OR *NEAL ADAMS* TELLING ME I *STUNK*, IT WOULD'VE BEEN *DIFFERENT*. BUT *VINNIE COLLETTA*?? THE MAN WHO INKED WITH AN *ERASER*?? THE *ENTIRE* TWO HOUR RETURN TRIP ON THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD, I WAS IN A *DAZE*--SO MUCH SO THAT, WHEN I GOT BEHIND THE WHEEL OF MY CAR IN THE STATION PARKING LOT TO DRIVE THE LAST FEW MILES BACK TO MY PARENTS HOUSE, I *ABSENTMINDEDLY* MADE A LEFT TURN PULLING OUT OF THE LOT RIGHT IN FRONT OF AN ONCOMING CAR, *NARROWLY* MISSING AN ENCOUNTER WITH ONE OF *NEIL GAIMAN'S* MOST POPULAR CHARACTERS BY THE *SLIMMEST* OF MARGINS!

BUT LIFE *DID* GO ON--*IF* YOU CALL WALLOWING IN SELF-PITY, NON-STOP MOPING, AND SEEING A LIFELONG DREAM SHATTERED *LIVING*. I MEAN, COULD I *EVEN* BRING MYSELF TO *READ* ONE OF MY ONCE-BELOVED COMICS AGAIN--MUCH LESS *DRAW* ONE? WOULD THE *MERE* EXPERIENCE BE TOO DEPRESSING? WELL, I FIGURED IT WAS TIME TO REMOUNT *THAT* HORSE, SO I GRABBED A RECENT PURCHASE AND SETTLED IN.

THAT BOOK JUST HAPPENED TO BE THE ELEVENTH ISSUE OF THE BLACK AND WHITE SHOWCASE TITLE, "*MARVEL PREVIEW*", AND THE SUMMER 1977 SPOTLIGHT WAS ON A 52 PAGE *STARLORD* STORY THAT UNITED THE TEAM OF *CHRIS CLAREMONT*, *JOHN BYRNE*, AND *TERRY AUSTIN* FOR THE FIRST TIME. GANG, WHEN I CLOSED THE COVERS ON THAT ONE, IT WAS *OFFICIAL*--I WAS *BACK* IN THE COMICS BIZ!!

THE ART WAS *VIBRANT*. THE SCRIPT WAS *CAPTIVATING*. SURE, A *LOT'S* GONE DOWN SINCE THAT STAR-LORD STORY WAS *INITIALLY* PUBLISHED, BUT EXAMINING IT TODAY, I CAN SEE WHERE CHRIS'S WRITING *JUMP-STARTED* A LOT THAT WAS TO FOLLOW.

HONEST TO GOD, THAT SINGLE SOLITARY COMIC PROVIDED ME WITH THE *NECESSARY INSPIRATION* TO FORGE ON IN THE FACE OF DOOM AND GLOOM, AND, BY CRACKY, IF IT WASN'T JUST SEVERAL-MONTHS LATER--AFTER ALMOST *ACCIDENTALLY* REVAMPING MY STYLE--THAT I FOUND MY "*DATELINE: G!!??*" FEATURE RUNNING IN WHAT IS TODAY *COMICS BUYERS GUIDE*! WOULD *ANY* OF WHAT FOLLOWED HAVE HAPPENED IF I HADN'T PICKED UP CHRIS JOHN, AND TERRY'S JEWEL WHEN I WAS AT MY LOWEST EBB?? HARD TO SAY. FOR SURE, BUT IT *IS* REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT DIVING RIGHT INTO ONE OF THE *POZEN* OR SO BOOKS VINNIE WAS INKING FOR DC AT THE TIME MIGHT *NOT* HAVE BEEN AS *WISE* A CHOICE...

AND *REMEMBER* WHAT I SAID ABOUT UPS AND DOWNS? WELL, YEARS LATER, WHEN *JIM SHOOTER* ENLISTED ME TO PRODUCE THE ILL-FATED--*AND* ILL-CONCEIVED--"*FRED HEMBECK DESTROYS THE MARVEL UNIVERSE*", I WAS PROMISED *TERRY AUSTIN* AS MY INKING PARTNER. WHAT I *GOT*--IN ONE OF FINAL JOBS BEFORE PASSING ON--WAS FINISHES BY NONE OTHER THAN *VINCE COLLETTA*!! BECAUSE OF NUMEROUS DELAYS, HE DIDN'T LIVE TO SEE IT PUBLISHED, AND I'M ABSOLUTELY *CERTAIN* HE HAD *NO* IDEA OF THE *IRONY* OF THE SITUATION, BUT I FOUND IT A *DARKLY AMUSING TWIST OF FATE* (THOUGH I *STILL* WOULD'VE PREFERRED TERRY!).

AND LOOK AT CHRIS. WITH THE HELP OF SOME *SWELL* ARTISTS, HE TOOK A SECOND --NO, MAKE THAT A *THIRD*-- STRING BOOK LIKE *THE X-MEN* AND BUILT IT INTO THE *THRIVING BLOCKBUSTER* OF A FRANCHISE THAT IT REMAINS TO THIS VERY DAY. NOW, *THAT* WAS AN *UP!*

THEN, AFTER SEVERAL DECADES OF SUCCESSFULLY SHEPHERDING THE MUTANTS, MARVEL *UNCEREMONIOUSLY* BUMPED HIM IN A FAILED ATTEMPT TO *COZY* UP WITH A GROUP OF ARTISTS, WHO, IN THE LONG RUN, LEFT *ANYWAY*, AND STARTED A PUBLISHING FIRM IN DIRECT COMPETITION WITH THE HOUSE OF Stan. *THAT* WAS *DEFINATELY* A *DOWN*--FOR CHRIS, AND, YUP, ULTIMATELY (*AND* IRONICALLY) FOR MARVEL TOO.

BUT, AFTER A FEW YEARS ON THE *SCRIBE FOR HIRE CIRCUIT*, WORKING FOR DC, DARK HORSE, AND OTHERS, CHRIS *NOW* FINDS HIMSELF *BACK* AT THE OL' HOMESTEAD, NOT *ONLY* GUIDING THEIR FLAGSHIP TITLE, "*THE FANTASTIC FOUR*", BUT IN POSSESSION OF AN *EXECUTIVE TITLE* AS WELL. ANOTHER *UP*.

UPS AND DOWNS. CHRIS CLAREMONT. VINNIE COLLETTA. YEAH, IT'S A *CRAZY* BUSINESS ALRIGHT. THE FACT IS, UNTIL HE READ THIS, CHRIS HAD *NO* IDEA OF THE *RESPONSIBILITY* HE SHOULDERED IN KEEPING *ME* IN THE INDUSTRY, FOR WHICH, I'D NOW LIKE TO *THANK* HIM--*AND* ASSURE HIM *NOT* TO WORRY: THERE'LL SURELY BE ANOTHER "*UP*" COMING ALONG SOON TO KEEP THINGS *BALANCED* OUT!

SO WHAT AM *I*? *WINDOW DRESSING*?

'FRAID SO, STAR-LORD. MAYBE *ANOTHER TIME*?..

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NextIssue

the legendary

Jim Aparo

Don't miss our issue on Jim Aparo! We cover his days at Charlton to DC Comics, his phenomenal output on such characters as: the Phantom Stranger, Aquaman, The Spectre, Batman, and his work today.

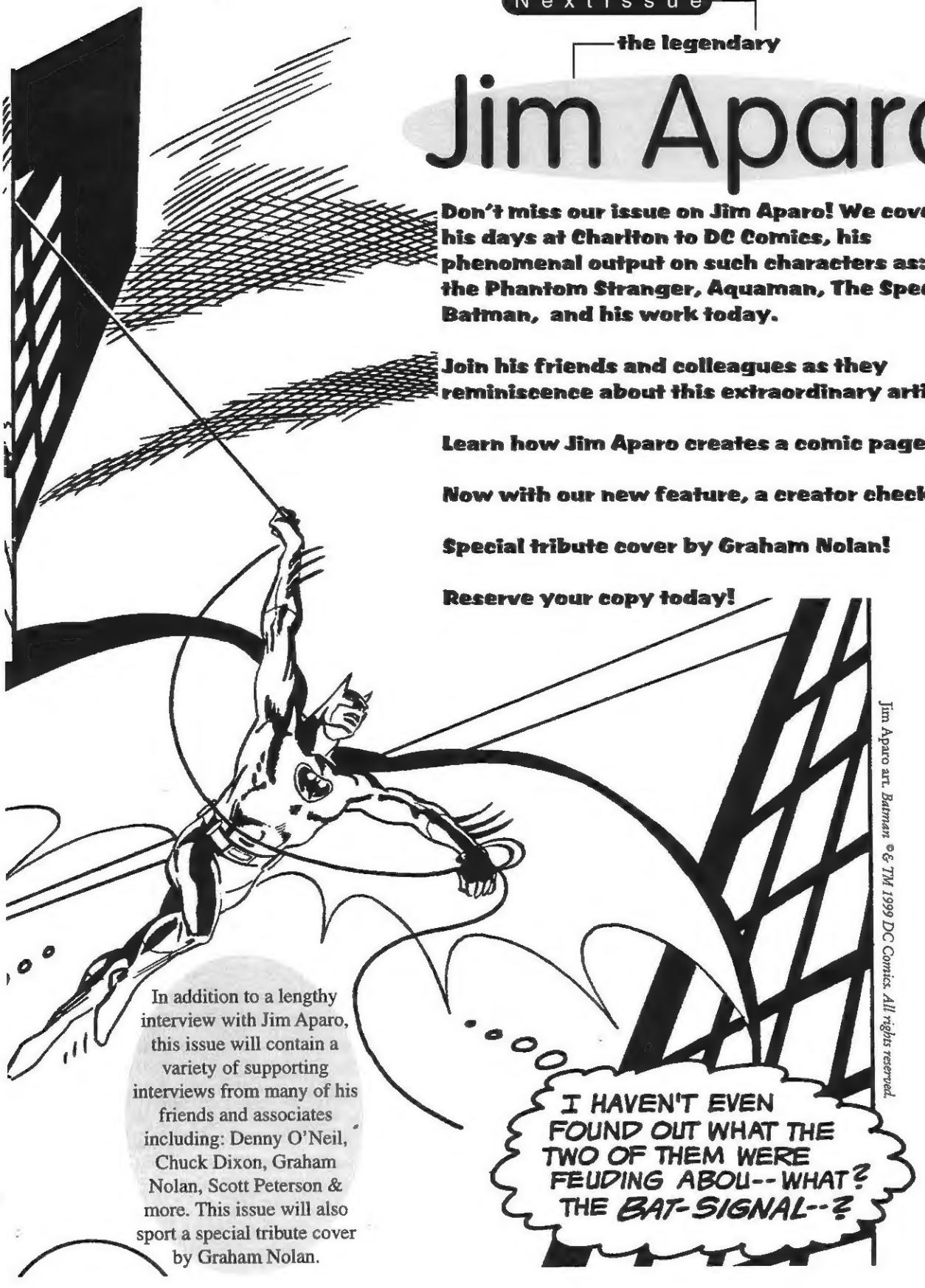
Join his friends and colleagues as they reminiscence about this extraordinary artist.

Learn how Jim Aparo creates a comic page!

Now with our new feature, a creator checklist!

Special tribute cover by Graham Nolan!

Reserve your copy today!



Jim Aparo art. *Batman* © & TM 1999 DC Comics. All rights reserved.

In addition to a lengthy interview with Jim Aparo, this issue will contain a variety of supporting interviews from many of his friends and associates including: Denny O'Neil, Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan, Scott Peterson & more. This issue will also sport a special tribute cover by Graham Nolan.